Great and Precious

PROMISES,

OR,

Some Sermons concerning the Promiſes, and the right application thereof:

Whereunto are added ſome other concerning the uſefulneſs of *Faith*, in advancing Sanctification:

As alſo, three more concerning the Faith of Aſſurance.

By Mr. *ANDREW GRAY*, late Miniſter of the Goſpel in *Glaſgow*.

All being reviſed ſince his death by ſome friends. The laſt Impreſſion carefully corrected and amended.

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2 Cor. 7. 1. *Having therefore theſe promiſes (dearly beloved) let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of God.*

EDINBURGH,

Printed by the Heir of *Andrew Anderſon*, and are to be ſold at his Houſe on the north ſide of the Croſs: *Anno DOM.* 1678.

To the Reader.

Christian Reader,

ALthough (upon some considerations) these following Sermons have been keeped back till now, and have waited the vacancy of the Press from other things; yet was it at first intended (the connexion of the purposes so requiring) that they should have come forth as soon as some other of this precious Author, which we did formerly publish: And therefore in the Preface which we then prefixed, we did relate to both, and give the Reader such advertisement as we conceive necessary concerning the one, as well as the other: So that we have nothing to do at present, but to put this little piece into thy hands, commending it to thy serious thoughts, and the Lords blessing upon them. Neither shall we use many words to this purpose. Only we find some help is offered unto thee in three most weighty and concerning points of Christian Religion, 1. *How by the lively exercise of Faith, thou may apply the great and precious Promises.* 2. *How by faith thou may advance the work of Sanctification.*

And 3. How thy faith may grow up unto assurance. Of all which we may truely say, that nothing can more seasonably take up the thoughts, nor bring more advantage to the souls of the Lords people in these times.

O how necessary is it in such troublesome days, to learn, how through Faith and Patience we may inherit the Promises: *and now when our strong corruption hath (in a manner) necessitat the wise Physician to mix unto us so bitter a cup, and give so strong a potion, in what a fainting and swouning condition must we be, if* by the two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, *we receive not also* the strong consolation. *Again when profanity and ungodliness hath so abounded in these Nations, that* from the top of the head to the sole of the foot, there is no soundness, but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores. *And when the corruption of the time, like* the sons of Zerviah, *are grown too strong even for the* Davids *who are amongst us; what should we study with more earnestness then to purify* our hearts by faith and *by* having these promises, to cleanse our selves from all filthiness of

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the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord? 3. *When the Lord hath removed us so far from peace, that the souls of many have even* forgot prosperity, *and the multiplied changes and revolutions in our days, hath so clearly demonstrat the instability of all sublunary glory, and so convincingly taught us, that this* is not our rest, *undoubtedly, it is a time to* look for a City that hath foundations, and to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure, *the subject then is useful.*

As to the manner of handling it; it is true much accuracy and neatness, is not to be expected in any work of this nature, being only the hasty gleanings of a Church Writer, and as to liveliness and power, though it be as easie to draw a picture with the heat and motion of a living man, as to write or print, these lively motions of the spirit, which do often accompany the Lords Messengers in preaching, and in an eminent measure were also let out upon this blessed Author; yet we suppose thou wilt find the matter most seriously and feelingly spoken unto, as from a heart which believed, and therefore spake: *Yea, the conceptions and expressions savouring much of an exer-*

ciſed ſpirit, not only much taken up in communion with God within it ſelf, but even thirſting alſo and panting for the ſalvation of others; nay, (in ſome meaſure, travelling in birth till Chriſt might be formed in them. *O that more of this holy zeal and fervency, might accompany this great meaſure of light and knowledge in the myſteries of the Goſpel, that the Lord hath graciouſly beſtowed both in Paſtors and People in this generation, that once again we might ſee (as in the days of* John Baptiſt) the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffering violence, and the violent taking it by force. *And that the bleſſed Spirit by the ſame gracious operations, may ſo ſwarm and enlarge thy ſoul in the uſe of this and all other means for thy eternal Salvation, is, and ſhall be the ſincere deſire of,*

Thy Servants for Chriſts ſake,

Robert Trail. John Stirling.

GREAT

Great and Precious
PROMISES.

SERMON I.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the* Divine Nature, *having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

MAy we not truely ſay, that if ever the Chriſtians who live in theſe days ſhall be advanced to ſtand within the holy place, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life, all theſe that are now before his Throne, may lay aſide their harps and give us leave to ſing? Will it not be a myſtery, ſuppoſe ye, unto heavenly *Enoch* that ſpent ſo much of his time in communion and fellowſhip with God, when he ſhall behold ſuch Chriſtians within that everlaſting reſt, that have ſpent ſo little of their time in correſponding with God? will it not be a myſtery unto believing *Abraham*, when he ſhall behold ſuch miſbelievers, ſuch diſputers of the Promiſes of God, advanced to reign with Chriſt? will it not be a myſtery unto wreſtling *Jacob*, when he ſhall behold theſe Chriſtians once crowned with immortal glory, that did ſo little know what it was as Princes to wreſtle with God, till they did prevail; Will it not be a wonder to patient *Job*, when he ſhall behold ſuch impatient Chriſtians as we have been, entering into that bleſſed place of repoſe? Will it not be a myſtery unto holy *David*, when he ſhall behold ſuch unmortified Chriſtians entering within that City, into which no unclean thing doth enter? Will it not be a myſtery unto tender *Joſiah*, to behold ſuch Chriſtians as we are, that have our hearts dying as ſtone

ſtone within us, entering into heaven? will it not be a myſtery unto upright *Nathaniel*, to behold ſuch hypocritical Chriſtians, as the moſt part of us are, entering within the holy place, and to ſee thoſe that have been cloathed with hypocriſie and guile, now clothed with the robes of immortal glory? And will it not be a myſtery unto ſelf-denied *Paul*, when he ſhall behold ſo proud and ſelfiſh Chriſtians enter into heaven? Give me leave to ſay this, go where we will, we ſhall be matchleſs and ſingular; for if we ſhall go into eternity of pain, we ſhall be the greateſt debtors unto the infinite juſtice of God, in regard of mercies we have received: and if we ſhall enter into eternity of joy, we ſhall be the greateſt debtors unto the ſpotleſs grace of Chriſt, in regard of mercy we have abuſed. There ſhall be none in heaven like to us, and if we ſhall go to hell, there ſhall be few there that may be compared unto us. And let me but add thus further before I come to the words, go where we will, we ſhall be out of doubt with our condition: within a ſhort time a real Chriſtian ſhall be exalted above the reach of his miſbelieving, a hypocrite ſhall be depreſſed below the reach of his faith, and one that is groſly in nature, he ſhall be abaſed beyond the reach of his preſumption: a Chriſtian ere long ſhall miſbelieve no more, a hypocrite ere long ſhall believe no more; and one that is groſly in nature ſhall ere long preſume no more: there is no miſbelief in heaven, and there is no faith nor preſumption of well-being in hell. But to come to that which we intend to ſpeak to, we told you when we firſt began our diſcourſe upon that precious and exalting grace of Faith under a twofold notion and conſideration. Firſt, As it is juſtifying. And ſecondly, as it is ſanctifying. For the firſt we reſolved to ſpeak to it in a twofold conſideration; Firſt, As it cloſeth with Chriſt ſimply as the object upon which it reſteth, and of this we have ſpoken from that place, 1 *John* 3. 23. Secondly, As it cloſeth with Chriſt as held forth in the promiſes. And now being to ſpeak of it in this conſideration, we have made choiſe of this place, in which theſe things concerning the promiſes, ſhortly; 1. Ye

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have that fountain and ſpring from whence the promiſes do flow, holden forth in the firſt words of the verſe, *whereby*, or as the words may be more fitly rendered) *by whom* relating unto Jeſus Chriſt, who is the original and ſpring of all Promiſes.

2. The properties of the promiſes, and theſe are, 1. The freedom of the promiſes, held forth in that word, *given*, whereby *are given*, which ſpeaketh this, that the promiſes are free gifts, flowing only from good pleaſure. 2. Their unchangeableneſs, and that is holden forth in the word, *Given*, the gifts and calling of God being without repentance. 3. That they are *exceeding great*, and the promiſes are called great, either in reſpect of that price that was laid down to purchaſe the promiſes; or they are called great in reſpect of the great things that are contained in them. 4. That they are *precious*; Now the promiſes are called precious, either in reſpect of their original, that they come from precious Chriſt; or elſe in reſpect of this, that they are the object (I mean the object *quo* or by which) of *precious* Faith, as it is called in the firſt verſe of this Chapter, or elſe they are precious, becauſe they are things that a Chriſtian ought to put an high account upon. For the word that is rendered precious, may likewiſe be rendered honourable, whereby are given unto us exceeding great and honourable promiſes.

3. We have holden forth in the words the great advantages of the promiſes: *By them we are made partakers of the divine nature.* Now this is not to be underſtood of any eſſential converſion of our ſubſtance into the ſubſtance of God, but of a Chriſtian having the divine vertues of Jeſus Chriſt impreſſed upon his ſoul, and expreſſed in his life and converſation.

And there is this laſtly, concerning the promiſes in the words, even the time when the promiſes are eminently accompliſhed; it is, *when we have eſcaped*, or as the word is, *when we have fled from the corruptions that are in the world through luſt*; That is the time when a Chriſtian meeteth with the accompliſhment of the promiſe.

Now before we can ſpeak to any of theſe, we muſt ſpeak a little unto ſome things, as neceſſary to be known in order to the better underſtanding of all: 1. We ſhall not dwell long in pointing out unto you what is a promiſe, We conceive it is a glorious diſcovery of the good will of God towards ſinners; and withal, a purpoſe and intendment, (and if we may ſay) an engagement to beſtow ſome ſpiritual or temporal good upon them, or to withhold ſome ſpiritual or temporal evil from them. And certain it is, that in this deſcription of the promiſe, there is a divine harmony betwixt Mercy and Truth, betwixt Righteouſneſs and Peace, they kiſs one another. Neither ſhall we ſtand long to point out the diſtinction of the promiſes. 1. There are ſome promiſes that are conditional, and there are ſome promiſes that are abſolute: abſolute promiſes are theſe that have no condition annexed unto the performance of them; ſuch a promiſe is that, that God will deſtroy the world no more by water, that is an abſolute promiſe: ſuch a promiſe was that of Gods ſending his Son into the world, that was an abſolute promiſe; and ſuch is that promiſe of converſion, in giving of the heart of fleſh, it is an abſolute promiſe. As for the conditional promiſes, they are theſe that do require ſome condition to be performed by the Chriſtian before the accompliſhment of the promiſe, ſuch as that promiſe of ſalvation is, requireth believing as going before it, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved*: And pardon, it is promiſed unto a Chriſtian upon repentance, and yet we confeſs that there is not a conditional promiſe that is in all the Covenant of Grace, but it may be reduced into an abſolute promiſe, in regard that the thing promiſed (in the conditional promiſe) is one abſolute free gift, and the condition of the promiſe is another. 2. There are ſome promiſes that are temporal; and ſome that are ſpiritual; temporal promiſes are theſe, that promiſe ſome temporal thing unto a Chriſtian; and ſpiritual promiſes are theſe, that promiſe the beſtowing of ſome thing that is of everlaſting concernment. 3. There

are ſome promiſes that are not accompliſhed in this life, ſuch as this, *That we ſhall ſee him as he is, and ſhall be made like unto him* : But for the promiſes of Faith and Juſtification , theſe are accompliſhed in this life. 4. There are ſome promiſes that are extraordinary, and there are ſome promiſes that are common : Extraordinary promiſes are theſe, that are given to ſome particular Believers, as a ſingular priviledge,ſuch was the promiſe that was given to *Abraham*, in his *ſeed ſhould all the families of the earth be bleſſed* : and that promiſe that was given to *Rebekah, that the elder ſhould ſerve the younger* : As for common promiſes, they are theſe, that every believer in Chriſt hath a right to make uſe of.

Neither ſhall we ſtand long to point out, that it is the duty of a Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes : it is clear from *Pſalm* 62. 8. *Truſt in him at all times, ye people.* And it is clear from the practice of that precious cloud of witneſſes recorded of in *Heb.* 11. that ſpent their days in imbracing of the promiſes. But, 7. We would have you conſider, that it is more eaſie for a Chriſtian believer to believe ſpiritual promiſes, then to believe temporal promiſes : It is eaſier to truſt Chriſt for eternal ſalvation, then to truſt him for our daily food, when we are redacted unto ſtraits. And the grounds upon which we aſſert this, may be theſe ; 1. Becauſe it is hard for a Chriſtian to believe that Chriſts death reacheth for the purchaſing of temporal promiſes, which more eaſily he taketh up in ſpiritual promiſes : for a Chriſtian can hardly believe that ſuch a thing was in Chriſts intention, as to die for his dayly food, which is moſt certain, if we conſider it as a ſpecial mercy. 2. In a Chriſtians believing of ſpiritual promiſes, there is often ſome ſenſe and reaſon that helpeth him to the exerciſe of faith, at leaſt, they preſs not the contrary ; but to believe a temporal promiſe when a Chriſtian is redacted unto a ſtrait, and that he can ſee no outgate preſent, ſenſe and reaſon ſtands upon the top of his faith, and preſſeth him to diſpair ;

As for Inſtance, when a Chriſtian is living upon the top of a mountain, and knoweth not where to ſup at night, to believe that there is a promiſe upon which he may reſt, that he ſhall not want his food; but that if the Lord have ſervice for him, he will provide, here he hath not only reaſon to diſpute againſt it, but the ſtrong pinching ſenſe of hunger, both crying out, *How can bread be given in the wilderneſs?* 3. The temptations that aſſaults a Chriſtian, to miſbelieve upon temporal promiſes, they are more ſubtile and more connatural to a Chriſtian, then his temptations that aſſault him in reſting upon the ſpiritual promiſes. When a Chriſtian is in ſtraits in the world, the temptations that hinder his exerciſe of faith, they are more conſonant to fleſh and blood; we are ready to yield to miſbelief then, becauſe we think it is rational and ſpeaketh the truth. 4. A Chriſtian is often ſo affrighted by his daily failings, or ſome particular more groſs out breakings in his life, that howbeit he may (through grace) be helped to believe that the Lord ſhall make out theſe promiſes which concern his eternal ſalvation, and ſo do him good in the latter end; yet he may be ſadly perplexed and diſtruſtfully, in making uſe of any particular temporary promiſe, for drawing forth any comfort or incouragement therefrom, as to his preſent exigent; becauſe he knoweth that although the Lord doth forgive his peoples iniquities, yet may he take vengeance on their inventions, *Pſal.* 99.8. and therefore may puniſh his preſent failing with the like calamities as he hath done others. 5. There is alſo much of a natural and carnal ſelf-love to a preſent life, remaining in the beſt, that we are many times worſe to ſatisfie in our ſecurities for the things of this life, then of that which is to come; and can more eaſily truſt the Lord for our ſouls, then for our bodies; ſo that though his naked word will ſometimes ſatisfie us for the one, yet it will not for the other. And the laſt ground of it may by a Chriſtians unacquaintedneſs with that lot of exerciſing Faith upon temporal promiſes, there being many who think

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not that there is uſe for faith, except for Salvation and the things above, which maketh his faith upon theſe more difficult, then upon promiſes that are ſpiritual: And this may appear moſt clearly, in that we find men more eaſily bear their ſpiritual wants (even a Chriſtian that is moſt exerciſed) then they bear their temporal wants: and more corruption and impatience doth ariſe from temporal want, then from ſpiritual want.

2. Conſider, that all a Chriſtians duties are turned over into promiſes: there is not a duty that is required of a Chriſtian, but it is converted into a promiſe. Is not Faith a duty, in 1 *John* 3. 23. *This is his Commandment that ye ſhould believe?* And is not that turned over into a promiſe, in *Jer.* 3. 16. *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father?* The word importeth, not only an act of neceſſity, but of violence, thou ſhalt do it, and in the 13. of *Zechary* at the cloſe, *Thou ſhalt call me thy Father.* And ſo in *Ezek.* 11. 19. Is not mortification a Chriſtians duty, *Col.* 3. 5. *Mortifie therefore your members?* and it is turned over in a promiſe, *Jer.* 32. 28: and *Ezek.* 36. 29. where he promiſeth, that he will purge away all their uncleanneſs, and it is moſt clear; from *Mic.* 7. 19. *I will ſubdue* (ſaith he) *all thine iniquities* it is not ſaid, *thou muſt ſubdue them*, but *I will do it.* Is not alſo the knowledge of God a commanded duty? and yet it is turned over into a promiſe, in the Covenant of Grace, *They ſhall know me from the higheſt to the loweſt, neither ſhall there be need any more, that one ſhould ſay, know the Lord for they ſhall be all taught of me.* Is not the commandment of fear your duty, as it is clear, from *Eccl.* 12. 13. and yet that is likewiſe turned over in a promiſe, *I will put my fear in their inward part, that they ſhall not depart away from me.* So tenderneſs is a Chriſtians duty; and yet is turned over in a promiſe: *I will take away their heart of ſtone, and give them an heart of fleſh.* And that I may ſay no more of this, look but to theſe four places, and there ye will ſee almoſt all duties turned over in promiſes; there is *Jer.* 31. *Jer.* 32. *Ezek.* 11. and *Ezek.* 36.

ye will ſee all the duties of the Covenant converted into promiſes. But may not ſome ſay, what advantage is there of this? much certainly every way, that duties are turned over into promiſes: it may give a Chriſtian hope, that he ſhall once perform theſe duties; will ye not once be tender? yes certainly, becauſe your tenderneſs lieth within a promiſe; will ye not once be much in the exerciſe of fear? No doubt ye will, and the ground of it is this, becauſe your fear lyeth within a promiſe, and ſo of the reſt. And, 2. There is this advantage of it, that all the duties required of a Chriſtian, are turned over in promiſes, becauſe by this means a Chriſtian may go to God, when he cannot perform ſuch a duty, and deſire him to fulfil his word, and accompliſh his promiſe; and ſo may make uſe, not only of the Omnipotency of God, but of the faithfulneſs of God alſo.

There is this third conſideration that we would propoſe, that there are ſome things of a Chriſtian within a promiſe, that he doth not believe to be within it, eſpecially theſe three, Firſt, the challenges of a Chriſtian are within a promiſe, when ye are convinced, that is the accompliſhment of a promiſe, this is clear from *Iſa.* 30. 21. where convictions and challenges are turned over in a promiſe; *when thou art turning unto the right hand, or to the left; thine ears ſhall hear a voice behind thee crying, this is the way, walk in it:* And it may be clear, that our convictions are the accompliſhment of promiſes, becauſe it is a work of the Comforters, as well to conceive, *John* 16. 9. as its for him to make one rejoyce; and if a Chriſtian could believe that his challenge were the accompliſhment of a promiſe, he might imbrace his challenges, he might ſee the faithfulneſs of God in his challenges, and he might ſee much *Love* in his challenges. 2. A Chriſtians croſs is within a promiſe, ſo that when a Chriſtian meets with ſuch afflictions, he may ſit down and cry out, this is the accompliſhment of a promiſe, and this is clear from *Pſal.* 89. 31, 32. wherein the midſt of the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace; that promiſe of

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viſiting their iniquities with rods, is put in the boſom of them; and from *Pſa.* 19. 75. *In faithfulneſs haſt thou afflicted me*; Why doth *David* ſay, in faithfulneſs? It was this, becauſe this croſs was the accompliſhment of a promiſe; and it may be clear alſo from that word, *Heb.* 12. 7: *Forget not the exhortation* (ſpeaking of the croſs) the word is, *Forget not the conſolation that ſpeaketh unto you.* As if the Holy Ghoſt did ſay, croſſes do yield much conſolation, as in verſ. 11. *They yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs*; And if this were believed, that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of the promiſes, it would help a Chriſtian unto much humble ſubmiſſion, and there would not be much murmuring under them, if once we did believe that they were the accompliſhment of a promiſe; Yea, there is this advantage further, that if we did believe that our croſſes were the accompliſhment of a promiſe, we would be much in advancing holineſs under our croſs: There is nothing that obſtructeth the ſweet fruits of righteouſneſs, under a croſs ſo much as impatience; and I would ſay this to commend the croſs, a Chriſtian never moveth ſo ſwiftly to heaven, as when he is under a ſanctified croſs; a croſs when it is ſanctified, will prove a Chriſtians motion to Heaven more then the enjoyments, for our enjoyments ordinarily do retard our way as much as further it. And there is this, Thirdly, that is within the promiſe, even your dayly food, and the hairs of your head; the hairs of a Chriſtians head are numbered, and within the Covenant. So that ye may ſee what a high reſpect Chriſt hath put upon Chriſtians, that is clear from that word, *Pſa.* 111. 5,8 *He hath given meat unto them that fear Him, He will ever be mindful of his Covenant.*

Our fourth Conſideration ſhall be, to point out a little theſe grounds upon which Chriſt doth delay his accompliſhment of the promiſes, It is certain that Chriſtians is oftentimes put to this, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* and eryeth out, *why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail*; and the grounds of this delay are theſe; Chriſt knoweth that a Chriſti-

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an can often better improve the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, then he can improve the accompliſhment it ſelf: we might find this in our experience, it being (for the moſt part) eaſier for a Chriſtian to bear his croſſes, then to bear his enjoyments: I think *David* never had ſo ſweet a time, as then, when he was purſued as a Partridge by his ſon *Abſolom*; then grace did breathe forth moſt ſweetly in his actions; but let *David* be under proſperity, and then we ſee he falleth in the ſin of Adultery; And therefore never repine when ye are under a croſs; for certainly, if we had ſpiritual underſtanding, we would not judge it ſo great a hazard to be under a croſs, as under proſperity, ſince we have greater ſtrength to bear the one, then to endure the other. 2. The ſloathfulneſs of a Chriſtian to whom the promiſes are made, this makes the promiſes to be delayed in their performances, as was clear in the people of *Iſrael*, they are fourty years in a wilderneſs before that promiſe of entering into *Canaan* is accompliſhed; It was a promiſe that could have been accompliſhed in a few days, and yet becauſe of their ſin, it was not accompliſhed for fourty years, ye may ſee from that word, in *Numb.* 14. 33, 34. 3. The accompliſhment of the promiſes is delayed, that Faith may be more put in exerciſe; this is clear from that remarkable word, *Pſal.* 105. 19. *Until the time that his word came*; that is, until the word of the Lord was accompliſhed; *the word of the Lord tryed him*, that is it was the matter of his exerciſe, an exerciſe eſpecially unto Faith; for indeed it is much for a Chriſtian to believe upon a word, when it is delayed in its accompliſhment. The fourth ground of delay is, that the exerciſe of Prayer may be more; and it is certain, that the beſt Improvement of delayes is, to be much in Prayer; the promiſes, they occaſion prayer, as is clear from *Exod.* 4. laſt, *They believed, and bowed down their heads and worſhipped*, and from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where the great promiſes being made to *David*, he cryeth out, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this pray-*

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unto God; and it is clear from *Pſal.* 119. 49. *Perform thy word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* It is a bad improvement of delays, when we turn impatient; and it is a bad improvement of delayes, when we quite our confidence. Know that promiſes are accompliſhed after delayes, and they have a luſter upon them, that they may compenſe all the delayes. 5. There is this other ground of the delayes of accompliſhment of the promiſes, even that the thing that is promiſed may be ſweet to a Chriſtian when it cometh: this is clear from that word of *Solomon*, Prov. 13. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart ſick; but when the deſire doth come, is as a tree of life*: O but a mercy that cometh to a Chriſtian through a promiſe, it is ſweet, yea, a drink of cold water taken up as the accompliſhment of a promiſe, is more ſweet *then a feaſt of fat things full of marrow, wine on the lees well refined*; to take up your bread and your drink as the accompliſhment of your promiſes, it would make them refreſhful to you. 6. The Lord delayes his promiſes, that a Chriſtian may be more in the exerciſe of dependency, and may be alwayes kept about the Throne. A Chriſtian goeth to God from a threefold principle, he goeth to God from a principle of Faith, from a principle of neceſſity, and from a principle of love: but would you know that which putteth a Chriſtian oftneſt to God? It is a principle of neceſſity: and believe it, that if neceſſity did not drive a Chriſtian unto the foot of the Throne, we would ſeldome go from a principle of Love, or from a principle of Faith. And there is this laſt ground of the delay of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, that the glory of the wiſdom of God may appear, and the glory of his power in the accompliſhment of the promiſe. When the promiſe is long beneath ground, then the wiſdom and power of God doth more appear in the accompliſhment of that promiſe. And from this I would only ſay to Chriſtians that are under that exerciſe, complaining of the want of the performance of the promiſes, theſe few

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things, believe that the promise shall once be accomplished, that *though the vision tarry, yet at last it shall speak.* 2. Believe, that every hours delay of the accomplishment of the promises hath a sweet design of love: there is not one moment of delay, but it is for the advantage of a Christian, as is clear from that word, *Rom.* 8. 28. And 3. that promise that cometh after long delayes, it hath these three sweet and soul-refreshing attendants. 1. It is performed most seasonably, a Christian, if he will observe, he will see infinite wisdom shining in timing the accomplishment of the promise, to such a particular day: a Christian will be constrained to cry of it, if the promise had been fulfilled before, there had not been such Art of wisdom appearing in the performance of it. 3. That the promise when it is accomplished, will engage a Christian more in the exercise of Love, then four promises accomplished at a short and smaller time: there is nothing that will so inflame the soul with love, as to have a promise accomplished after delayes. And, 3. The promises accomplished after delayes, have much sense waiting upon the performance thereof: I think hardly a Christian ever met with the accomplishment of a promise after long delay, but his *soul was made as a watered garden, and as springs of water, whose waters fail not*: this promise faileth and cometh to a Christian perfumed with love.

Now we shall shut up our discourse at this time, and shall only speak to these six defects of a Christians Faith, in believing the promises. 1. That our faith is impatient, we cannot stay upon the promises, if it be delayed; Hence ye will see that in Scripture often, patience is annexed to faith; which speaketh this, that it is impossible for a Christian to believe as he ought, that wanteth the exercise of patience, See *Heb.* 6. 12. *Be ye followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise*; And that word in Rev. *This is the faith and patience of the Saints.* 2. Our faith in closing with the promises it is most unconstant; A Christian when first a promise is born in upon his

his ſpirit, he will then believe the promiſe, and joyn with it; but after ſix or ſeven days go about, he will change his Faith; that is remarkably clear from *Exod.* 4.31. compared with *Exod.* 6. 9. When firſt the Promiſe cometh to the people of *Iſrael*, that they ſhall go out of *Egypt*, it is ſaid of them in the fourth Chapter at the cloſe, *They believed the promiſes and worſhipped*; But look to them in *Exod.* 6. 9. and there ye will ſee them not believing, becauſe of *bitterneſs and anxiety of heart*; And I will tell you the grounds why our Faith is unconſtant; 1. Sometimes the reading of a promiſe to a Chriſtian will be as ſavoury meat; ſometimes when a Chriſtian will read one time in the Covenant, it will be perfumed with love, and his ſoul will be tranſported with joy after it, and at another time when he ſhall read that promiſe again, it will be *taſteleſs as the white of an egg*, and *as his ſorrowful meat.* 2. That we are not much in ſtudying the exerciſe of the things that are promiſed, which certainly would cut ſhort many of our debates. There is this third defect of our Faith, that we are not diligent; a diligent Faith we call this, that after a Chriſtian hath believed, he would be much in the exerciſe of prayer for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, he would be much in the exerciſe of meditation to make that promiſe ſweet and lively to him. And a fourth defect is this, we build our Faith more upon diſpenſations then upon the Word; when diſpenſations ſay that which the promiſe ſaith, then we will believe; but when diſpenſations ſpeak the contrary language unto the promiſe, then we will reject our confidence and hope. I will tell you two great myſteries of believing, It is hard for a Chriſtian to believe when the Commentary ſeemeth to deſtroy the Text, that is, when the Commentary ſeemeth to declare, that the promiſe ſhall never be accompliſhed. In ſum it is this, It is hard to believe when diſpenſations will ſay the word of the Lord will fail; and when promiſes bids you believe. 2. It is hard for a Chriſtian to take impoſſibilities in the one hand, and the word of promiſe

in the other, and ſay, O precious Chriſt, reconcile theſe two together, that impoſſibilities do not deſtroy the promiſe, but that the promiſe may be accompliſhed, notwithſtanding of this. 5. We have theſe deſects of faith amongſt us, that we build our Faith more upon ſenſe then upon the word of promiſe; when a Chriſtian is in a good frame, he will believe, but when Chriſt hideth his face, he will then give his hope; And laſtly; there is this that our Faith upon the promiſes is general, we believe the truth of the promiſes, but we ſtudy not to make a particular application of them. I ſhall not ſtand long to make any uſe of what we have ſpoken; Only I would have the Chriſtians of this age, and thoſe that are here, to go home with this conviction, the damnable neglect of believing the promiſes. A Chriſtian neglecteth theſe three duties of Religion moſt, he neglecteth the duty of ſelf-examining, the duty of believing the promiſes, and that noble ſoul-exalting duty of meditation: theſe three duties a Chriſtian doth ſo conſtantly neglect, that almoſt he is above the reach of conviction, that he doth neglect them. But I would ſay a word unto theſe that are deſtitute of the Faith of the Promiſes, and are ſtrangers unto theſe bleſſed things that are recorded within the Covenant: And it is only this; doubtleſs ye muſt believe your ſenſes, if ye will not believe his Word. It is a queſtion indeed, which of all the ſenſes ſhall be moſt ſatisfied in Heaven, whether that of ſeeing, *When we ſhall behold the King in his beauty, and ſee him as he is*; or that of hearing, when we ſhall hear theſe melodious *Halelujahs* of that *innumerable company*, which are *about the Throne*; without any jarring amongſt them all; or that of ſmelling, when we ſhall find the ſweet perfume of his garments, which are perfumed *with all the powders of the Merchant*; or that of touching, when we find *Maries* inhibition taken off, *touch me not*, and be admitted to imbrace him who is now *aſcended to his Father*; or that of taſting, when we ſhall drink of theſe *rivers of conſolation, that ſhall never run dry*. This, I ſay, is indeed a queſtion; But give me leave

leave to tell you, O atheiſts and enemies of God; It is alſo a queſtion, which of all the five ſenſes of a Reprobate ſhall be moſt tormented in Hell, & what would you anſwer to it now? whether think ye the ſenſe of ſight, when ye ſhall behold the darkneſs of wrath, the devil and his angels, and your fellow-priſoners in that dungeon? Or whether ſhall your ſenſe of hearing be moſt tormented in hell, when ye hear theſe ſcraichings and howlings that ſhall eternally aſcend up before God, by the ſouls that are in priſon? O but the greateſt enemy would have compaſſion upon his enemy to hear their crys: Or whether will ye ſay the ſenſe of taſting ſhall be moſt tormented, when ye ſhall drink of theſe *rivers of brimſtone*? Or will the ſenſe of touching, when ye ſhall be eternally ſcorched with theſe flames of eternal indignation? Or the ſenſe of ſmelling, when they ſhall eternally be as it were ſuffocated with the ſmoak of that ſulphurious furnace that ſhall never be quenched. O think you if *Cain* would come from hell and preach that doctrine, that we ſhould not perſecute the Saints, would we liſten unto him? If *Abſolom* ſhould come from hell, and ſhould preach againſt the evil of ambition, would we liſten unto him? and if *Achitophel* ſhould riſe from the dead, and preach that doctrine unto you, *Let not the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom*, would we ſtop our ears? Or if *Judas* would come from hell, and preach to you the evil of hypocriſie, in betraying the Son of man with a kiſs, would we believe him? Or if *Dives* that is recorded in the Goſpel ſhould come from hell, and choiſe that Text to preach upon, Jam. 5. 1. *Go to ye rich men and howl, and weep for your miſeries that ſhall come upon you.* And if *Demas* would come and ſecond him with that word, love not the world, nor the things that are in the world, I fear ye would cry out, we will imbrace that Doctrine *at another time.* We deſire not to inſiſt much upon theſe; but, O to believe, that there is an eternity of pain, and that there is an eternity of joy. I will give you a deſcription of the atheiſt, and let him think upon it, it is eaſier to convince hundreds of

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you, that ye want the fear of God, then that ye want the faith and love of God. Oh, an imaginary faith, and a conceit of love, will ye ever quite these two Idols? I confess, once ye shall have a Faith that no man shall ever rob you of, and that is, the faith of that truth, that when once ye enter into eternity of pain, there is no redemption out of that place. Awake, awake, for behold the Judge cometh, and he shall render vengeance unto these that know him not. To his blessed and most precious Name, we desire to give praise.

SERMON II.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these you might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

THough Justice and Judgement be the habitation of his Throne, yet Mercy and Truth do go before it as two divine Ushers to convey us home unto God. There are these two things that we would have Christians principally to study; 1. That ye would be much in the study of these wrongs and injuries that ye have done to Christ. And, 2. That ye would be much in the study of these infinite acts of precious condescendency that Christ hath manifested towards you, that the one may provoke you unto sorrow and humility, and the other may provoke you unto a sweet astonishment and admiration. And I would ask you this, If Christ should present that challenge unto you,, which *Absolom* presented unto *Hushai*, *Is this thy kindness unto thy friend?* O beloved, what could you answer, when you were thus reproved? I think if Christ have not forgetfulness for that blessed end, to forget the wrongs and injuries of his own, I know not unto what use Christ should have forgetfulness; for he knoweth not what it is to forget our good works, but

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he hath a bleſſed art of forgetting our wrongs, though we may ſay on the contrary that we have a curſed Art of forgetting them our ſelves. There are theſe three things that a Chriſtian doth forget; they much forget Chriſt, that is the great Author of the Promiſes, ſo that he may charge them with this, *Why have ye forgotten me?* 2. They forget their mercies, and theſe divine receipts of love, that Chriſt hath given unto them. 3. They forget even their iniquity, yea, ſometimes they forget them before Chriſt doth forget them, and paſs an act of pardon upon them. I ſhall not ſtand long to plead with you for undervaluing of that bleſſed and noble plant of renown; I think if there were no more to evidence that low eſteem that we have of Chriſt, but only this, that we are ſo much in ſlighting the promiſes, it were more then ſufficient; but beſides, is there not this to teſtifie how much you undervalue that *holy and juſt one*; that ye ſtudy more to have an inward. We may call the Chriſtians of the time *Nephtali*, they are *as a hind let looſe*, and they give goodly words, but we do not give Chriſt goodly practice; and is there not this alſo that teſtifieth our undervaluing of Chriſt, that we ſlight ſo much ſecret and retired correſpondence and communion with him? I ſuppoſe there are ſome that are here, whoſe conſciences beareth them record, they do not exerciſe themſelves unto godlineſs, and I ſhall only ſay that word, that *Gideon* ſpake in another caſe, *If God be with us, how then is all this come upon us?* ſuch a ſpirit of formality, ſuch a ſpirit of lazineſs, ſuch a ſpirit of hardneſs, and ſuch a ſpirit of undervaluing of Chriſt? I ſuppoſe that if there were a Chronicle written of all the lives of the Saints that have been ſince *Adams* dayes; and the Chriſtians of this time ſhould read over that Chronicle, when they ſhould begin and read the life of *Adam*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his; and when they ſhould read the life of *Abel*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his; and when they ſhould read the life of *Enoch*, they might put this to the cloſe of it, my life is not like his: O to which of the Saints can

we go? and if ye ſhould call, is there any that would anſwer you, *thy life is like mine.*

But to come to the words; we told you at the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon them, that there were theſe things concerning the promiſes, holden forth in them, 1. The riſe of the promiſes is holden forth in theſe words, *whereby*, or as we cleared, the word may be thus rendered, *by whom*, which relateth unto Jeſus Chriſt.

The ſecond thing concerning the promiſes holden forth in the verſe is, the property of the promiſes, and they are theſe four; 1. That the promiſes are free, holden forth in that word, *whereby are given unto us*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant are free, and not debt. There is that ſecond property of the promiſes, that they are *unchangeable*, holden forth in that word, *Given*, the gifts and the calling of God *being without repentance.* And the third property of the promiſes was, That they were exceeding *Great*, and the fourth, That they were exceeding *Precious.*

The third thing concerning the promiſes, holden forth in the words, is the advantages that floweth to a Chriſtian by the promiſes, that by them they might be *made partakers of the divine nature.*

And the laſt thing concerning them was, that time when the promiſes were eſpecially accompliſhed, it was then, when *we had eſcaped the pollutions of the world through luſt.*

Now as for the firſt thing, to wit, the fountain, original and riſe of the promiſes, which is Jeſus Chriſt, *by whom*; In ſpeaking unto this, we ſhall ſpeak a little unto theſe two; 1. In what reſpects Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain and original of the promiſes; and we conceive he may be ſaid to be ſo; Firſt, becauſe he purchaſed the promiſes unto us by his own precious blood. There is not a promiſe in all the everlaſting Covenant, but it is the price of the blood of the Son of God; this is clear in *Epheſ.* 2. 12, 13. where ſpeaking of the Gentiles, that they were ſtrangers unto the Covenant of promiſe: he ſetteth down in the 13. verſ. the way by which they were brought

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near unto the Covenant, and had right unto it, it was *through the blood of his croſs:* and it is clear in *Epheſ.* 3. 6. that the promiſes of the Goſpel *were given unto us in him*, that is, through the purchaſe of him, and his merits; and 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. where we are ſaid *to be bought by his blood*, or, the promiſe of Redemption was the price of blood. Secondly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in this reſpect, that he is the perſon unto whom the promiſes of the Covenant are firſt made, and through him are made over unto us; this is clear in *Gal.* 3. 16. the promiſes were given unto *Abraham*, not unto many ſeeds: but as unto one, that is *Chriſt*; and it is clear from 2 *Tim.* 1. 9. where the promiſes of grace and ſalvation are ſaid to be given unto us in *him before the world was made.* It is true that the promiſes are not given to Chriſt, conſidered only as the Son of God, (for ſo he had no other relation to us then the Father or the Holy Ghoſt) but yet they are firſt made to him as the Mediator and *head of his Church*, and as that bleſſed *Days-man, and King of Saints*, and the great Lord keeper of all the Rights of the young heirs of Glory; *And we all receive of his fulneſs, and grace for grace.* Thirdly, there is this reſpect, in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, that he it is by whom we have a right unto all the promiſes; this is clear, 1 *Cor.* 3. 12, 13. where theſe two are conjoyned, *ye are Chriſts*, and then, *all things are yours*; if once a ſoul cloſe with Chriſt in the Covenant of promiſe, there is not one promiſe in Scripture, but he may write this ſuperſcription above it, *This is mine, this is mine.* Fourthly, Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in regard that he is the perſon that applyeth the promiſes, and maketh us to reſt upon them, and to believe them; this *David* did acknowledge, *Pſal.* 119. 49. *Remember thy word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope*, as if *David* ſaid, I had never believed a promiſe, except thou hadſt cauſed me, and it is clear, *Eph.* 2. 8. where faith is called the gift of God, even faith to believe the pro-

miſes,it is the royal donation and gift of Chriſt. 5. He may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes, in that he qualifieth us for the accompliſhment of them. Chriſt giveth us ſtrength to obey the condition that is annexed to the promiſe, and Chriſt he infuſeth habitual grace in us,by which we may be helped to exerciſe faith upon the promiſes;ſo that grant all the Scripture were promiſes, yet if Chriſt did not help us,we would never believe a promiſe,and there would never a promiſe be accompliſhed unto us. 6. The laſt reſpect in which Chriſt may be ſaid to be the fountain of the promiſes,is,that all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, they have their accompliſhment through him, according to that word, 2 *Cor.* 1. 20. *All the promiſes of God are in him,yea, and in him Amen*; ſo that ye are to bleſs Chriſt, not only for the giving of the promiſes, but for the accompliſhment of them alſo.

That which ſecondly we ſhall ſpeak to from this,that Chriſt is the fountain of the promiſes, ſhall be to preſs upon Chriſtians theſe three excellent and ſoul concerning duties; The firſt, that they would not have a light account of the promiſes, ſince they are rivolets and ſtreams that flow from that bleſſed Ocean: O but if a Chriſtian did believe that the promiſe that he hath for his daily bread, it was bought with the blood of the ſecond perſon of the bleſſed Trinity, would he not have an high account of that promiſe? And let me tell you, it is impoſſible for the promiſes to be in high account with you, till once ye reduce them unto their riſe, and to their fountain; but once know that all the promiſes are ſweet ſtreams of love that have run through the heart of precious Chriſt,& from thence they have flowed unto you, and then when this is believed, how ſhall ye ſit down, and comfort your ſelves in the promiſes, and rejoyce exceedingly in them.

The ſecond duty that we preſs upon you from this, is, that ſince Chriſt is the fountain and original of the promiſes, be much in the application of the promiſes. And here I ſhall ſpeak a little upon theſe three things; 1. A little unto the evidences & marks of thoſe that have a right

a right to apply the promiſes;and ſhall only name unto you theſe few : The firſt is,to be a perſon under convictions of ſenſible need and neceſſity of ſuch a promiſe; have ye convictions of ſuch a neceſſity ? Then from that ye may infer, I have a right to the promiſes, and are not theſe glad tidings? I know there are ſome that are under ſuch convictions of their ſin , that they think it boldneſs to apply the promiſes, but I would ſay this unto you, that if ye were under ſenſible convictions of your loſtneſs, ye would give a world for an hair of a promiſe whereby to hang : believe it, the exerciſe of miſbelief is never at its hight, till ye would be content to dig through the earth to get a promiſe, and till we were at that , that our ſouls would purſue after them from the one end of the world to the other : and for the grounds of this aſſertion, that ſenſible neceſſity giveth a right to the promiſes,if ye will look to theſe great promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant , are they not given to that Chriſtian that is under a need, *Iſa.* 55. 1, 2 and *Mat.* 11. 28. where the great promiſe of the Goſpel is given out, and the invitation of Jeſus Chriſt, Is unto theſe that are weary *and heavy laden.* Chriſt would account it an excellent courteſie, that ye would not diſpute, but believe, and that ye would look upon your neceſſities as his call to believe the promiſes. 2. A perſon that hath an high account of the promiſes, he hath a right to apply the promiſes. Let once your ſoul cloſe with Chriſt by Faith and Love , and then you may with boldneſs cloſe with the promiſes. I confeſs if ye were more in believing the promiſes , we would have a higher and more full eſteem of the promiſer : Would you know the reaſon that Chriſt is not accounted matchleſs, it is, becauſe of this our neceſſities of the promiſes is not always within our ſight, and our exerciſing of Faith upon the promiſes is not our daily work. 3. This looketh like a right to the promiſe; that which is born in upon a Chriſtians ſpirit when he is near God in prayer, and is under ſome ſenſible exerciſe of his own infirmity , he hath readily a right to apply the promiſe : As for inſtance , when

a Chriſtian is debarring himſelfout of Chriſt, which is but an unpleaſant exerciſe; to meet with a promiſe born in upon their ſpirit, that giveth them ſome ground of hope, that they may apply and reſt upon Chriſt; or when a Chriſtian is fainting under affliction, and is like to give over; to meet with a word of promiſe born in upon his ſpirit, that doth uphold him in the day of his tryal, he may probably conclude he hath a right to believe that promiſe. 4. There is that evidence, perſons that have a high account of the promiſes, that have a right to apply the promiſes, it is an excellent & moſt concerning work for a Chriſtian to believe the excellency of the promiſes, when he cannot have the actual application of the promiſes. For when once a Chriſtian cometh to this, that the great things of the everlaſting Covenant are matchleſs in his eyes; then that is the *valley* of *Achor*; and a door of hope, that ere long Chriſt will apply them. 5. When a Chriſtian hath great delight in the promiſes, when they are ſweet to his taſte, and are the refreſhing and rejoycing of his heart, that is an undeniable ſign that he hath a right to make uſe of ſuch promiſes; were your ſouls never refreſhed by reading of the boundleſs Covenant of love, & the ſweet promiſes that are in it? I would have Chriſtians marking theſe promiſes that have upholden them in their ſtraits, I would have them marking the promiſes that have been lively to their ſouls, and ſay, this once was my goodly meat, and made me to rejoyce in the *houſe of my affliction*; and I would have a Chriſtian marking the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, in which he will ſee infinite wiſdome ſhining in ordering the accompliſhment of the promiſes to ſuch a time. And I would have a Chriſtian marking the frame of his own ſpirit, when the promiſes are accompliſhed (as ye will find often in Scripture) and by all this, ye ſhould find ſuch a reviving and profitable delight in the promiſes, that ſhould give a very full evidence of our right unto them. 6. Laſtly, when a Chriſtian under ſtraits can receive conſolation from no other thing, but all prove Phyſicians of no value, and miſerable

miſerable comforters; when a Chriſtian is convinced, there is no joy to be had under ſuch a croſs but in the faith of the promiſes, that is an evidence that this perſon hath a right to the promiſes. I would only ſay this, O beloved in the Lord, is not this your guilt, your undervaluing of the promiſes, and your little exerciſe of faith? I would poſe you with this, when laſt ſtudied ye to apply any promiſe of the Covenant of grace? When laſt did ye exerciſe faith upon any of them? Shall I tell you what is the practice of the moſt part of us, we ſtudy perhaps to apply one promiſe, but for the reſt of the promiſes we lay them aſide, and do totally neglect them: we ſtudy to apply the promiſes of ſalvation, and of having redemption through Chriſt, but for the promiſes of ſanctification, for the promiſes to help us to perform duties, for the promiſes to ſupport us under the croſs, for the promiſes to comfort us in our way to heaven, for promiſes in reference to all ordinary things, we are not much in application of theſe: O but if a chriſtian were believing the promiſes, he might ſit down even while he is here, and ſing one of the ſongs of Zion, though yet *but in a ſtrange land.*

The ſecond thing that I ſhall ſpeak to upon the application of the promiſes, ſhall be to propoſe unto you ſome rules that ye would make uſe of in the application of them; and ſhall name unto you theſe,

Firſt, Study theſe four things, one is the faithfulneſs and truth of the promiſes, that ſuch a thing is the ſaying of him that is the *faithful witneſs, and Amen*: this was the practice of *Paul*, 1 Tim. 1. 10. the way how he was brought to make application of the promiſes was, 1. By laying down that concluſion, this is a faithful ſaying; and *Rev.* 21. from the beginning to the 6. verſe, where there are great promiſes made, and much ſpoken to the commendation of Heaven, this is ſubjoyned in the 6. verſe, *Theſe are the faithful and true ſayings of God.* As if *John* had ſaid, all that I have ſpoken concerning Heaven, will be to no purpoſe, except ye believe the truth of the pro-

miſes, and this was the practice of *David*, 2 *Sam.*7.28. *Thy words are truth, O Lord*, he ſubjoyneth this unto the actual application of the promiſes. 2. Study the ſweetneſs and excellency of the promiſes, this was the practice of *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1.15. *This is a faithful saying*, and then he ſubjoyneth, *and worthy of all acceptation*; And this was the practice of *David*, Pſalm 119. 72. *I have eſteemed the laws of thy mouth better then thouſands of gold and ſilver.* O ſuch an opinion, to eſteem the promiſes here then thouſands of gold. It is Heterodox amongſt the moſt part of you, that prefer the world before the promiſes of the Covenant: and it was his practice, ver. 103. and 162. *I rejoice at thy word as one that findeth great ſpoil*; he had higher account of the promiſes then to divide the ſpoil after war. 3. Let the Chriſtian ſtudy the neceſſity that he hath of the promiſes, that there is no way of winning above that neceſſity, but by the cloſing with the promiſe, and laying hold upon it. 4. Laſtly, A Chriſtian would ſtudy the ſuitableneſs that is in the promiſe to anſwer their neceſſities, that if they be under need, there is a precious way of remedy manifeſted unto them by theſe.

The ſecond rule that we would preſcribe in the application of the promiſes, is, that ye do not expect ſenſible comforts immediatly after ye have believed the promiſe, A Chriſtian may apply the promiſes, and yet want the joy and ſweetneſs that is in them; This is clear, *Pſal.* 119. 85. *My ſoul cleaveth unto the duſt*, There he is under much anxiety and much ſorrow; and yet he is a believer of the promiſes in the mean time, as the words following do clear, *Quicken me according to thy word*; he layeth claim to the promiſe, and this is clear in the 81. verſ. of that Pſalm, *My ſoul doth faint within me*; There is much exerciſe of ſorrow, and yet he is a believer of the promiſe, *But I hope in thy word*; A Chriſtian after he hath believed the promiſe, he would put a blank in Chriſts hand concerning the ſweetneſs of the promiſe to be made out in its own time, What is ſenſe? It is the precious indulgence

dulgence of Chriſt that he giveth to his own. I would preis this upon you, propheſie nothing before your believing of the promiſe; but having believed, ye may ſurely propheſie that the promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed in its own time, and the word that he hath ſpoken ſhall certainly come to paſs: but as for ſenſe, as for quickening, as for comforting, as for receiving, ye muſt put a blank in the hand of Chriſt to diſpenſe theſe things to you as he ſeeth fit.

The third rule in the application of the promiſes, is, That ye do not build your Faith upon this, that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed, becauſe probability and reaſon ſeem to ſay the thing: I would ſay this to a Chriſtian that ye may oftentimes ſuſpect the promiſe not near to be accompliſhed, when reaſon ſaith, *Behold the word of the Lord cometh*, and that oftentimes the Lord is nearer when we begin to paſs a concluſion, the word is not at hand, and the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes is not near: Certainly many times before Chriſt accompliſh the promiſes, he will learn us to be living above ſenſe and reaſon, and he will have reaſon to ſubmit to faith, and he will have probabilities to contradict the accompliſhment of the promiſes; and when probabilities are furtheſt away, that is his time to work; this is clear in theſe two ſignal deliverances of the people of *Iſrael* from *Egypt* and *Babylon*, *Exod.* 3. 4, 5. and *Ezek.* 37. at the beginning. And therefore as a Chriſtian would not quit his grip of the promiſes, becauſe diſpenſations ſeem to contradict the accompliſhment of the promiſe, and ſometimes cryeth out, *why art thou become unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* So on the other hand, ye are to build your faith upon the promiſes, and not upon diſpenſations, even when favourable, ſeeing that we know the way that Chriſt taketh many times to accompliſh the promiſes, is by contrary means to our apprehenſion; *His paths are in the whirl-wind, and his footſteps are not known.* And may we not cry out, who can take up the ways of God, whoſe ways are more ſubtile than the *way of an eagle in the air, or the way of a ſerpent upon the rock, or the way of a ſhip upon the ſea*, &c. The

The fourth rule that we would preſcribe unto you in the application of the promiſe, is, That ye would cloſe abſolutely with the promiſes, I mean, without limiting the only One. There is a limited cloſing with the promiſe, which is the frequent exerciſe of our hearts; we will cloſe with the promiſe, but with this reſtraint laid upon Chriſt, that whenſoever we begin to believe the promiſes, all things might go as we deſire, and this is the great occaſion that we do ſo frequently reject our confidence, and do refuſe our hope, when God doth not anſwer our peremptory expectations.

Fifthly, We give you this rule, that ye would eye Chriſt much in the application of the promiſes. There is a three-fold ſight of Chriſt that a Chriſtian ſhould have when he applyeth the promiſes, a Chriſtian ſhould have a ſight of the boundleſs and condeſcending love of Chriſt; that ſo he may be conſtrained to hope, and may be conſtrained to love. 2. A Chriſtian ſhould eye the faithfulneſs and unchangeableneſs of Chriſt, that what his bleſſed lips have ſpoken, *he will alſo do*, and *what he hath ſaid he will likewiſe bring to paſs*. And 3. In the application of the promiſes, he muſt eye the omnipotency of Chriſt, that what he hath ſaid, he is able to bring to paſs. And O when ſhall we have occaſion to ſing that ſong, *What hath God wrought for us?* which was the ſong that *Balaam* ſung, who yet was but a profane wretch.

6. There is this rule that we would preſcribe unto you in the application of the promiſes, that a Chriſtian after he hath applyed them, he would be much in the exerciſe of Prayer for the accompliſhment of theſe promiſes; this was the practice of *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. When God in paſſing many precious promiſes, *David* doth ſubjoyn that word, *Therefore have I found in my heart to pray this prayer*; And we ſee in *Ezek.* 36. 37. along that Chapter, God is paſſing moſt excellent promiſes; and yet in verſe 37. this is ſubjoyned, *For all theſe things, I will be enquired of the houſe of Iſrael*: And in *Jer.* 29. 10, 12. where the time is coming when God would accompliſh *his good*

word

word (as he ſpeaketh) that is ſubjoyned in verſ. 12. *Then ſhall ye call upon me, and ſeek after me.* And *Daniel* 9. 2, 3. when *Daniel* knew that the promiſe was near the time of its accompliſhment, then *he ſet himſelf to prayer and ſupplication to ſeek the face of God.* I would ſay theſe three words unto a Chriſtian; the ſmalleſt mercy that a Chriſtian meeteth with, if he can call it *Samuel*, that is, *The ſon of prayer*, and if ye can call it *Iſaac*, that is, *The child of promiſe*, he may then, and doth ordinarily receive much conſolation in that mercy. O but a mercy flowing to a Chriſtian through a promiſe, if it were but a drink of cold water, and a piece of brown bread, it will be more excellent cheer, then all the dainties of the Kings of the earth. O but to eat and drink, taking theſe things as the accompliſhment of the promiſes, this would make us eat our bread *with ſingleneſs of heart, and much chearfulneſs.* And there is this, ſecondly, I would ſay unto you, when a promiſe is accompliſhed, and a Chriſtian is not much in the exerciſe of Prayer in the accompliſhment of it, one to a hundred if he loſe not the ſanctified uſe of the accompliſhment of that promiſe. Ah, know ye not that a promiſe when it is accompliſhed, may be a curſe to a Chriſtian. That word is moſt terrible, *Mal:* 2. 2. *I will curſe your bleſſings.* And the laſt word that I would ſay to this, is, that a Chriſtian who believeth the promiſes, notwithſtanding that diſpenſations ſeem to contradict it, that promiſe ſhall be made moſt refreſhful unto his ſpirit, when it is accompliſhed. O but a Chriſtian that never had much jealouſie, nor much ſtaggering about the accompliſhment of the promiſe, when it cometh, it will be moſt refreſhful to him: And believe it, there is not one hours entertainment of jealouſie about the accompliſhment of the promiſe, but it will impare the ſweetneſs of the promiſe, when it is accompliſhed, except ſo far, that the tranſcendent and free love of Chriſt is ſeen in the accompliſhment of them, notwithſtanding of our miſbelief.

The laſt rule that I ſhall offer a Chriſtian in his application of the promiſes, when ye meet with objec-

ons that ye cannot anſwer, but they do ſilence you; I will tell you what ye ſhould do with them, miſken theſe obſtructions, and lay them by: This was the practice of believing *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 9. *He conſidered not his own body being weak, and the deadneſs of Sarahs womb.* The weakneſs of his own body, and the deadneſs of *Sarahs* womb were ſo ſtrong objections in the way of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; that he could not anſwer them; and the way he taketh to refute them, was, *He did not conſider them*; as it were, he forgot thoſe objections and went about his duty.

The third thing that we ſhall ſpeak to, in relation to the application of the promiſes, ſhall be ſomewhat for helping a Chriſtian that is ſtanding at too great a diſtance to get the promiſes applyed.

Firſt, A Chriſtian would be much in the ſtudy of theſe experiences of the faithfulneſs of God, and what others have met with, when ye begin to apply a promiſe, ye may be helped in the Faith of applying promiſes, by beholding theſe great records of the faithfulneſs of God that are extant. This was the way the Angel took with *Mary Luk.* 1. 36. where helping her to believe that promiſe, that of her ſhould be born the Meſſiah; this is the way that he ſtrengthened her. *Thy couſin Elizabeth is now with child, and hath gone ſix moneths, even ſhe that was called barren.* And I ſhall only name theſe two places in Scripture which may help you exceedingly, and ſtrengthen you to believe the promiſes upon this account; There is that word in *Exod.* 12. 41, and 51. It is a moſt remarkable ſaying, *At the end of four hundred and thirty years, on that ſame very day,* (there was not one day miſſed after the time that was ſet, was accompliſhed) *In that ſame very day they came out*, and this is marked in *verſ.* 51. again: And there is that word, 1 *King.* 8. 56. where *Solomon*, when he is ſinging moſt ſweetly to God, he taketh an obſervation of this, *Loe* (ſaith he) *there hath not failed one word that God hath ſpoken to you by his ſervant Moſes.*

2. Ye would be much in the conſideration of your own

own experiences, that you have in the accompliſhment of promiſes formerly: This was *Davids* way that he took to ſtrengthen himſelf to believe the promiſe, *He that hath delivered me from the rage of the Lion, and the paw of the Bear, he will deliver me from this uncircumciſed Philiſtine*, 1 Sam. 17. 35, and 37, 46. And this was the practice of the Apoſtle *Paul*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 17, 18. *God hath delivered me from the cruel lion*: And from thence he ſubjoyneth, *And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work*: And this was his practice, 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. where theſe three are ſweetly knit together. *God hath delivered me, he doth deliver me, and he ſhall deliver me.* There is not one experience of this kind, but it preacheth that unto you, O believe the promiſe, and do not call in queſtion his faithfulneſs.

3. There is that help, that ye ſtudy much the excellency of the promiſes, that is the moſt noble and excellent way to move you to apply the promiſes, according to that word, *Pſal.* 119. 111. *I have made thy teſtimonies my heritage for ever*; and the ground of it is that, *becauſe they are the rejoycing of my heart.* The ſweetneſs of the promiſes would engage our heart to apply them. And there is that fourth help, a Chriſtian would ſtudy the omnipotency of God, that ſo he may be helped to believe and apply the promiſe: This is clear in *Zech.* 12. 1. where God going to paſs many excellent promiſes, he uſhers in that diſcourſe with high and majeſtick deſcriptions of his power, in that he *ſtretcheth forth the heaven. and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the ſpirit of man within him.* And this was the practice of *Abraham*, Rom. 4. 21. the way how he came to believe the promiſe, *He counteth him able* that made it, that he might perform it. Fifthly For your help in applying of the promiſes, Study much the unchangeableneſs of Chriſt, and his faithfulneſs; know that he is the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and for ever. This was the way that *Sarah* came to the faith of the promiſes, *Heb* 11. 11. *She believed*, and the ground of it is, that *ſhe judged him faithful that had promiſed.* There is not one act of unbelief that a Chriſtian

Christian falleth into, but it saith, that God is not faithful, and that he is not true.

Now the last duty that we would press from this point, that Christ is the fountain of the promises, is, that we may have an high esteem of the promises, even of Jesus Christ, *in whom they are yea, and Amen.* And I shall close at this time with this, are there not many here that have no respect unto him who is that *faithfulness, and the Amen*; who hath promised us *himself, and all things*: and if ye will not take with the challenge, let your hearts but answer these two or three things. 1. Hath not the loss of things in the world affected your heart more then ever absence from Christ did? Hath it not? And can such a soul say, I have an high account of the Promiser? Is it possible that these that will mourn more under the absence of their idols, then for the want of him, that they can have an high account of Jesus Christ? I am perswaded of this, there are some Merchants, that the loss of their goods at the Sea, hath diverted them from their nights rest, and yet absence from Christ never divert them from their sleep one hour. O when did love to find out Jesus Christ, and to enjoy his fellowship, make you rise up in the silent watches of the night, and to pursue after him. 2. Have not your souls delighted more on the enjoyment of the things of a world, then ever they did in the enjoyment of Christ. Is not this true, that the increase of wine and oyl, and of silver and gold, hath affected your hearts more with joy than ever Christ did? and have you a high esteem of the Promiser? 3. Are you taking delight to entertain fellowship and communion with the Promiser? Is this true? when went you to your Prayers, but ye wearied ere ye went away? & have you a high account of the Promiser? Is not that the language of your hearts, *O when shall the Sabbath be over? and when shall the new Moon be gone, that I may pursue after my idols?* I would pose you with this, If there were no eye to take notice of you, would you not slight secret Prayer? would you not slight Family-Prayer? We love not to serve Jesus Christ. I know

there

there are Atheiſts here, that would love to go to Heaven without Faith, Love, Prayer, and Repentance, they would love to go to Heaven by a way that never one went before them. And now I ſhall ſay but this one word to you that are the heirs of the promiſe, and have the bleſſed expectation of Heaven, whatever the world do, eſteem ye highly of him: O remember and comfort your ſelves in the thoughts of the bleſſed day which Chriſt (after he hath paſt the ſentence of condemnation upon the wicked) ſhall go in upon the head of the Troups of the firſt-born, he ſhall walk before as through the Ports of the new Jeruſalem having crowns of immortal glory upon their heads, & then ſhall follow after him his Angels, and then ſhall follow after him the bleſſed company of the firſt-born, every one having the harps of God in their hands, and they ſhall be ſinging as they enter in through the Ports of the City, *Halleluiahs unto him that was dead and is alive, and now liveth for evermore.* O, to believe that day when firſt we ſhall enter in through the ſtreets of the New Jeruſalem, when we ſhall be cloathed in white robes, having crowns upon our heads? O, ſuch a day if it were believed, might make us often ſhake our glaſs, and *ſtretch out our necks*, (as the word is, *Rom.* 8. 19.) till once we ſaw that bleſſed day were approaching to us? There is no wearying in Heaven, the promiſes are now accompliſhed unto them, and they are inheriting the promiſes; when ſhall that word be accompliſhed, or when ſhall we have occaſion to ſay it? *Mark* 1.37. *Behold all men ſeek after thee.* O, the word that theſe Diſciples ſpake to Chriſt: O, ſtudy to love him, ſtudy to believe on him, for, he perſwaded he is upon his way. And I ſhall ſay no more but this, that all the promiſes, that are within the bounds of this everlaſting Covenant, they are yea, and Amen, in an Imbraced Chriſt, and laid hold on by faith; ſo I ſay, all the curſes that are in *Deut.* 25. 27, 28. and all the curſes that are within the volume of the Book of this Covenant, they ſhall be yea, and Amen in a deſpiſed Chriſt, and not be laid hold upon by faith.

SERMON III.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

SOmetimes the ſoul of a Chriſtian doth move in the paths of God, and in the way toward Zion *as the chariots of Aminadab*, when they are under the Soul-enlivening and quickning influences of Heaven, and ſometimes the ſoul of a Chriſtian doth move in thoſe bleſſed paths as *Pharaohs* chariots, *they drive moſt heavily* when there is a cloud between the precious face of Chriſt and them: and we conceive, that ſound and ſpiritual exerciſe of Faith upon the promiſes would make Chriſtians motion more ſwift towards Heaven. We grant Chriſt hath three different ways of guiding ſons and daughters to glory: There are ſome that Chriſt carrieth to Heaven in a chariot paved with love, that all alongſt their life, they are living within ſight of that promiſed Land, and are taken up with the refreſhing of heavenly joys; ſuch an one was *Enoch*, who ſpent his days in walking with God. there are ſome that Chriſt guideth to Heaven in a chariot that is drawn with ſpeckled horſes; they have mixed diſpenſations of ſorrow and joy attending them in their walk, and they have a winter and a ſummer, they have a night and a day, and ſuch an one was *Job*. 3. There are ſome that Chriſt carrieth to Heaven in a fiery chariot, that all alongs their life they are under diſtracting terrors of the moſt high, and are living perpetually to their own apprehenſions upon the borders of hell, and ſuch an one was *Heman*, whom Chriſt thus guided to Heaven: however if we ſhall go there, we need not much diſpute the way how we came, *for he doth all things well*. And upon the other part, Satan hath three different ways of guiding ſouls

ſouls unto everlaſting torment: there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of deluſions, making them believe that they are ſtill going to Heaven; and ſuch are the hypocrites in Sion: and I ſhall ſay, I think that chariot was never ſo filled as it is in theſe days. O fear that anxious diſappointment that many of you (it is like) will meet with! An hypocrite he hath ſtrong hopes, he hath ſtrong idols, he hath ſtrong deluſions, theſe are his three attendants. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of profanity & ignorance of God, *whoſe judgement goeth before hand*, and they are known that they are going there. And there are ſome that Satan carrieth to hell in a chariot of civility, whoſe Religion ſtands in this, *concerning the letter of the Law to be blameleſs*. And certainly, believing of the promiſes, and ſtudying to exerciſe faith upon them, is that which might prevent many of theſe damnable ſoul-deſtroying and murdering deluſions that are within ſome of our breaſts. There are three things in Scripture that are called precious: Chriſt he is called precious, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. Faith is called precious, 2 *Pet.* 1. 1. *To you that are partakers of the like precious faith with us*; and the promiſes they are called precious, in the words that we have read, and Faith (as it were) hath two bleſſed eyes, by one of theſe it beholdeth Chriſt, and by another of theſe it beholdeth the promiſes, and fixeth it ſelf upon them. O Chriſtians and expectants of Heaven, would you know what is the riſe of all the ſad things that have befallen you in theſe days? It is this, in ſhort, ye believe not the promiſes. O Chriſtians, what is the reaſon that ye carry not your croſſes with patience? It is, becauſe ye believe not the promiſes by which your ſouls muſt be upholden in the day of your affliction. O Chriſtian, what is the riſe of your little mortification? Is it not becauſe ye believe not the promiſes; for by them ye ſhould *be made partakers of the divine nature*. O Chriſtian, what is the ground that ye pray ſo little, and that you pray with ſo little ſucceſs? It is becauſe ye believe not the promiſes. A Chriſti-

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an, when he goeth to pray, he ſhould take theſe two things along ; 1. The ſenſible convictions of his neceſſities : And, 2. The precious promiſes that is given to anſwer that neceſſity, the one would provoke fervency, and the other Faith. Are there not ſome here that knoweth not what it is to pray upon a promiſe, and that maketh you to pray to ſo little purpoſe. O Chriſtian, what is the reaſon of your ſo much ſorrow, and of your little ſpiritual comfort? It is that ye believe not the promiſes : It is no wonder that your names be called *Marah*, becauſe ye exerciſe not faith upon the precious promiſes of God. I think without wronging you or any that are here ; I doubt much if ever Chriſtians had ſuch hearts, as the moſt part of us have : O what a heart is that, that can neither pray nor praiſe ? both are alike myſteries unto them ; What a heart is that, O Chriſtian that can neither believe promiſe, believe threatnings, nor obey commands? What a heart is that, that can neither ſorrow for ſin, nor rejoyce in God ? and what a heart is that, that can neither love Chriſt when he is preſent, nor can they long for Chriſt when he is abſent, and what a heart is that, O Chriſtian, that can neither love heaven, nor can fear hell? and is there not ſuch hearts with us, even with us that are here this day.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we ſpake a little to the firſt thing in them, which was the riſe and original of the promiſes, holden forth in that word, *whereby*, or *by whom*. The ſecond thing in the words, was the properties of the promiſes ; and we told you that there were theſe four holden forth in the words. The firſt property of the promiſes, is, that they *are free*, which is imported in that word, *are given* ; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant being the precious and free gifts of God. Hence you will ſee that oft-times the tenor of the Covenant of Grace runs upon that ſtrain, *I will give you*, as is clear, Jer. 32. and 39. *I will give one heart*, and *Ezek.* 36. 26. *I will give you a new heart*, and *Ezek.* 11. 19.

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I will give you; it is the ſtrain of the language of the Covenant of Grace, to *give*.

Now in the ſpeaking upon this firſt property of the promiſes, to wit, *their freedom*. I ſhall ſpeak a little unto theſe two, the firſt thing ſhall be to point out unto you the way how a Chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes and then I ſhall from thence preſs ſome duties.

And in ſhort, as to the firſt, we conceive that a Chriſtian may win to the diſtinct uptaking of the freedom of the promiſes, by theſe conſiderations; 1. Let a Chriſtian caſt his eye upon the ſweet riſe, and ſpring or fountain of the promiſes, and there ye will ſee their freedom ſhining moſt clear: for what is the fountain of the promiſes? Is it not the boundleſs and everlaſting love of Chriſt: this is clear, *Deut.*7.8. where God giving a reaſon of all the great things that he had performed for them, he ſetteth down the riſe of it, *Becauſe I loved you*, ſaith he: and again the ground of this is; *Becauſe I loved you*; There being no reaſon of love, but love: and it is clear, 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. where *David* having received many precious promiſes, he ſetteth down the riſe of all theſe in that verſe, *For thy words ſake*, ſaith he, *and according to thine own heart, haſt thou done all theſe things to make them known to thy ſervant.* And it is clear, *Ezek.* 17. 18. where God calleth the time of entring into Covenant with them, *a time of love*; that love, it was eminently ſhining in that day, when God did condeſcend to Covenant with them: And hence ye ſee in Scripture, that the promiſes they are called by the name of *mercy*, Mic. 7. 20. *To perform the mercy to Abraham*, which is the *Promiſes*; and they are ſo called; becauſe mercy and boundleſs love is the ſole fountain and ſpring of all theſe promiſes. Secondly, Conſider the perſons who have a right to make uſe of the promiſes. Muſt not the promiſes be free, when the Proclamation is upon theſe terms, *Rev.* 21. 17. *Whoſoever will, let him come*, there is nothing to give you a right to the promiſes, but only a willingneſs to

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imbrace them, if ye will ye may take them. And thirdly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, in this, that any condition which is annexed to the promise, Christ giveth to the Believer strength to perform that condition; It is known that faith is the condition of the promises, and it is certain that Christ giveth a Believer that condition as well as he giveth him the promise, *Philip.* 1. 29. *To you it is given to believe*; and *Eph.* 2. 8. *It is the gift of God*; It is impossible for a Christian to perform the condition, except Christ who is surety for him did perform it. Fourthly, ye may read the freedom of the promises, if ye consider the time when the promises are accomplished, it is often at such a time, when the Christian hath been, and is under no very spiritual frame. Hence ye will see in *Ezek.* 16. 60, 61. That when the promises are accomplished, then God requireth *confusion and blushing of face*, because of their former ways, and *Ezek.* 36.34 when the promises are accomplished, then that is the time when the Lord calleth them to *remember their own evil ways, and their doings that were not good*; yea he will have them and all the world to know, *it is not for their sakes that he doth this*, therefore he commandeth them to be *ashamed and confounded for their own ways*, or the posture they were in when he accomplished his promises: And if there were no other thing to speak the freedom of the promises, but the trysting of the accomplishment of them with such a frame, it were more then sufficient; but besides this, see *Davids* practice, 2 *Sam.* 7. 8. he readeth the freedom of the promises, from his own imperfections, *what am I* (saith he) *and what is my fathers house, that thou shouldest have brought me hitherto?* And even in the same Text, there is an Emphasis in that word *to us*, *whereby are given to us*, as if the Apostle did say, to prove that the promises are gifts; I can bring no other argument so strong as this, *They are given us.* Fifthly, Ye may read the freedom of the Promises, if ye will consider and take up the Infinite fulness and all-sufficiency of the *Promiser*,

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that there is nothing without himſelf that can perſwade him to give ſuch promiſes. Hence ye will ſee *Gen.* 17. 1. when he is making the Covenant with *Abraham*, he putteth it ſtill in the frontiſpiece of the Covenant, *I am God all-ſufficient*, as it were, to put off all thought of merit that *Abraham* might have, and that *Abraham* might be perſwaded of this, that there was not any imaginable perfection in himſelf, that could be the ground and riſe of ſuch promiſes. And there is that laſtly, from which ye may read the freedom of the promiſes, if ye conſider the greatneſs of theſe promiſes, if they were of a lower nature, then were it leſs to be wondred, if merit ſhould come in to plead for it ſelf; but when a Chriſtian ſhall compare himſelf, and the greatneſs of the promiſes together, he cannot but then ſing that bleſſed ſong, *Theſe are the gifts and donations of God, and what am I, and what is my fathers houſe, that thou hoſt brought me hitherto?*

Now the ſecond thing that we purpoſed to ſpeak to, is, to preſs ſome duties upon you from this, that the promiſes are free, and we ſhall lay before you theſe three; The firſt, That ſince the promiſes of God are free, then as you would not deſtroy your own ſouls, be much in making uſe and application of the promiſes: Are not the promiſes your life? Did not all the Saints that went to heaven before us, go to Heaven, living upon the promiſes? there was not a ſtep of *Abrahams* life; but he walked with a promiſe in it; there was not an affliction that *Abraham* met with, but he took comfort to himſelf from the promiſes; and I ſhall remove theſe two miſtakes that are incident to Chriſtians in the application of the promiſes, even from theſe grounds, that they are three;

The firſt is this, There are ſome Chriſtians that will not apply the promiſes, becauſe they are under the convictions of their own infirmities, and of their own baſeneſs: ſo that when we preſs you to believe the promiſes, ye reject this counſel becauſe ye conſult with your own infirmities. This was the practice of *David*, Pſal. 22. 4. *Our fathers truſted in thee: they*

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truſted and were delivered: but he durſt not truſt in the 6. *verſe*, *But I am a worm, and not a man, I am a reproach among the people.* And it is that ſame divinity that is in theſe days, when we preſs you to believe the promiſes, becauſe of the great cloud of witneſſes that have gone before you, that believed the promiſes. O ſay ye, if I were like *David* and *Abraham*, I would believe the promiſes, but truely *David* ſaid that ſame that lived before you, If I were like my fathers, I would believe the promiſes, but I am not like my fathers. And therefore I would ſay to you theſe two words; 1. Are ye inferionr or ſhort unto *David* in holineſs, or neceſſities? We do not queſtion but all of you will anſwer, we are not inferiour to *David* in neceſſities, but in holineſs; Then ſay ye, If we be not inferiour to *David* in neceſſities, then make uſe of the promiſes; for as we cleared the laſt day, neceſſities giveth a right in making uſe of the promiſes. 2. I would ſay, I am certainly perſwaded, that ſenſible neceſſity would cut ſhort many of our formal debates, in cloſing with the promiſes, neceſſities (as ye uſe to ſpeak) hath no Law, and neceſſity hath no manners. Let me ſay that to you who will not cloſe with the promiſes, that if ye were under ſenſible neceſſity, if Chriſt ſhould forbid you to cloſe with ſuch a promiſe, ye would cloſe with it though he forbid you, as the woman of *Canaan* did, there is nothing but ſenſible neceſſity will overcome it: neceſſity never diſpures its right, for it goeth over the belly of ſuch a diſpute, it preſently maketh uſe of that that its need calleth for.

Secondly, There is that other miſtake amongſt Chriſtians in believing the promiſes, that they want the qualifications annexed to the promiſes, and therefore they dare not believe the promiſes, eſpecially that promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt, they think they are not under ſuch a deep meaſure of humiliation, of ſorrow for ſin, nor under ſuch a lively apprehenſion of the excellency of Chriſt. And I ſhall ſay but theſe ſix things unto theſe that will not cloſe with Chriſt, be-

cauſe

cauſe they want qualifications, or at leaſt, have not theſe qualifications after ſuch a way. Firſt, Let me tell thee (O Chriſtian that thus diſputes,) go between the firſt ſteps of a chriſtians way to Heaven, and the laſt, and ſee if ye can behold a grave upon which this is written. Behold here lieth a man or a woman that came to Chriſt to imbrace him, and he would not receive them; Did ye ever behold ſuch a grave as this? And why then do ye ſo much diſpute? Will ye take a tryal of Chriſt; whether he will refuſe you if ye come, and if he ſhall refuſe you, ſure I am he will do that which he never did to any before you. The 2. thing I would ſay to ſuch, that the want of ſuch degrees of ſuch things, ought not to be a ground of your not cloſing with Chriſt; for if ye had theſe qualifications that ye require, ye would maintain the ſame diſputes that ye do now; for when we deſire you to cloſe with Chriſt, ye anſwer, that your ſorrow is not come to ſuch a height as it ought, nor is your humiliation come to ſuch a height, as you pitch for your ſelf to come to. O Chriſtian, if ye come to ten times more, and yet ten times more, ye would have that ſame diſpute then which ye have now; and the ground of it is this, the more that a Chriſtian hath real ſorrow, he will oftentimes be the more in the apprehenſion that he hath not ſorrow. Thirdly, If ye want the qualifications that are required in theſe that ſhould cloſe with Chriſt in the Covenant of promiſe, then come to Chriſt to get theſe qualifications. I would only aſk at you, think ye to ſpin ſorrow for ſin out of your own hearts? Think ye to ſpin humiliation for ſin out of theſe wretched breaſts of yours? ye muſt come to Chriſt for ſorrow, as well as ye come to Chriſt for life. Fourthly, All the qualifications that are annexed unto that promiſe of cloſing with Chriſt and coming to him, they point out rather the qualification of them that will come, then the qualification of thoſe that ought to come: Ye read ſuch a command as that, *Come unto me all ye that are wearied and heavy laden.* O ſay ye, I am no weary, and

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I am not under the burden of ſin, therefore I cannot come: I will tell you what is the meaning of that command, Chriſt inviteth thoſe w ho have the greateſt unwillingneſs, to come and get willingneſſe: But withal it ſheweth this, none will come to get reſt from Chriſt, but theſe that are firſt weary, and that this is the Lords method of working, firſt to make weary, and then to eaſe, but no ſuch matter in his Word. That firſt we muſt have a wearineſſe of our own making, or elſe he will not receive us; now but when ye come ye will be weary, and he will receive you. Fifthly, let me ſay to you who thus diſputes, make your want of qualifications the very ground of your cloſing with Chriſt; I ſhal but in three places let you ſee this ſtrange arguing of Faith in cloſing with the promiſes: There is that, *Pſal.* 40. 11, 12. *Let thy truth continually preſerve me*, that is, let thy promiſes be accompliſhed, and made lively unto me, which are my preſervation: and would ye know the ground and reaſon that he annexeth unto this; For, ſaith he. *Innumerable evils compaſs me about, they have taken ſuch hold of me, that I am not able to look up.* He maketh his very want of qualifications, the grounds of his cloſing with the promiſe, and ſeeking the accompliſhment of it; and there is that ſecond expreſſion which is moſt wonderful, *Pſal.* 25. 11. *David* prayeth for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *Pardon my ſin.* upon that ſame very account, *becauſe it is great:* And I ſhall give you a third place in which the arguing of Faith is moſt myſterious, *Exodus* 33. compared with *Exodus* 34. 9. In the firſt place, God denieth the accompliſhment of the promiſe *of going up amongſt the people*; And the ground he giveth of it is, *Becauſe*, ſaith he, *ye are a ſtiff necked people.* And *chap.* 34. *verſe* 9. When *Moſes* is praying for the accompliſhment of that promiſe, *That God would go amongſt them*; he taketh that ſame very argument out of the mouth of God; Go up amongſt us; *For* ſaith he, *we are a ſtiff-necked people*; God ſaid, he would not go up, becauſe they were a ſtiff-necked people, and *Moſes* deſireth

him

him to go up becauſe of this. And there is this laſtly that we would ſay to you, that ſo much diſpute, if ye would have theſe qualifications that ye want, ye would ſtudy to cloſe with Chriſt by Faith; Would ye have ſorrow for ſin? then believe; Would ye have high thoughts of Chriſt? then believe; Would ye have humiliation? then believe; for believing is a mother grace unto all theſe.

The ſecond duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration, that the promiſes are free, is; that when the promiſes are given to you, and are accompliſhed, ye would ſtudy to be denyed to any merit in your ſelves, which ye may ſuppoſe to be the riſe of the giving or accompliſhment of the promiſes. There is nothing that a Chriſtian receiveth, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not a conviction that tryſteth a Chriſtian, but it is the fruit of infinite love: there is not one real ſigh for ſin, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not one blink of the precious countenance of Chriſt, but it is a fruit of infinite love: there is not the leaſt degree of hatred againſt ſin, but it is the fruit of infinite love; there is not the leaſt promiſe that is accompliſhed unto you, but it is the fruit of infinite love; ſo that upon your receipts from God, there is reaſon to ſing that ſong, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thee doth belong the glory*: And therefore, I would preſs this upon you, O Chriſtians, reduce all your mercies unto the fountain. and there ſit down and pen ſongs of everlaſting praiſe to him. Will ye but take a view of this, there is not one bit of bread that ye eat, that is within a promiſe, but it is a mercy that hath come running to you through the bowels and tender heart of Chriſt: his heart is the fountain of all our mercies, and they ſweetly ſtream out of that precious fountain; ſo that if ye had no other thing to commend your mercies from, but that it is a gift of the heart of Chriſt, ye may take it in your arms upon this account, and ſolace your ſelves with it.

The laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this conſideration, that the promiſes are free, is this;

Ye

Ye would be ſtudying to cloſe with Jeſus Chriſt that is promiſed and freely holden out to you in the Goſpel; O ſinner of eight years old, O ſinner of ſixty years old, O atheiſt of fourty years old, and O ſinner of twenty years old and downward! I do here invite you, as the Ambaſſadour of Jeſus Chriſt, to imbrace Chriſt freely offered to you in the promiſes; yea, I do invite you by all the vertues of that noble *Plant of Renown*; by that everlaſting love that dwelt in his precious heart, by all the ſufferings and wounds that he received, by his eternal glory, and by all the bleſſings and joyes of heaven, and by that love that ye owe to your precious and immortal ſouls, that ye would come and imbrace him freely offered to you in the Goſpel. And for the further preſſing of this, and for clearing of the way of your cloſing with him, I ſhall firſt propoſe ſome Goſpel myſteries and ſweetly agreeeing contradictions, (if ſo we may ſpeak) held forth in Scripture, 1. *Come and buy Chriſt, and yet buy him without money*; that is, come and receive Chriſt, and ye ſhall have as unqueſtionable a right to him as if ye had bought him, that is to *buy without money*: ye have nothing to commend you to Chriſt but neceſſities, and neceſſities bid you go, and Chriſt biddeth you come, why then will ye ſit this call? 2. What a Goſpel myſtery is that, *Ye are to buy Chriſt, and he is above price*, there is nothing that we can give to buy that *pearl of greateſt price*, and yet we muſt buy him; then the meaning is, come, and buy Chriſt by faith, and by forſaking of your idols, this is all the price that he doth require for himſelf; and ſo he requireth nothing of you but what he himſelf doth give, or what is both your duty and advantage to forſake, and which is no gain for him to receive: Chriſt is not enriched by your hearts, and by giving of your conſent to him. 3. This is a Goſpel myſtery. that *we are to buy without money and without price*, and *yet to buy with a price*, according to that word *Prov.* 17. 17. there is a price put in the hands of fools, to buy wiſdom, and what is the meaning of that

to buy with price, and to buy without price? It is in ſhort this, though Chriſt be offered to you in the Goſpel freely, ye muſt not ſit down, but be active in cloſing with him; What is the price that Chriſt requireth of you? even this, that ye would forſake your ſoul-deſtroying idols, and that ye would forſake your former evil ways, and take hold of the preſent opportunity for imbracing him. And O! curſed ſhall the heart be that will not imbrace Chriſt; O but to have him one hour in our arms, it were well worth ten thouſand Eternities of the enjoyment of all things that are here below: Ye would never open your arms again to another lover, if once ye had him *between your breaſts.* O but a ſight of him that now is the eternal raviſhment of all that are above, would tranſport your hearts with joy, with delight, and admiration, above all expreſſion! Fourthly, there is this Goſpel myſtery by which we would preſs you to imbrace Chriſt; *A Chriſtian muſt buy Chriſt, and yet he muſt have him freely.* Is there not an inconſiſtence do you ſuppoſe, between buying and having freely? But I would ſay this to clear it, Chriſt is both the ſeller, he is the wares, and he is the buyer; Chriſt he preſenteth himſelf unto your hearts, and he deſireth to ſell himſelf, and he perſwadeth and freely enableth you to buy him. I will tell you what Chriſt doth, he ſtandeth without our hearts, and within our hearts, he ſtandeth without and knocketh by the Word; and he ſtandeth within, and openeth by his Spirit; Chriſt, he both commandeth, and he obeyeth; both within doors, and without doors, and all this he doth freely.

The ſecond thing I ſhall ſay to perſwade your hearts to take Chriſt freely promiſed and offered unto you, ſhall be this; Will ye conſider that there is willingneſs in the heart of Chriſt to take you. I ſhall give unto you theſe ſix things that ſpeaketh out Chriſt his willingneſs to receive you. Firſt, Doth he not command you to come and receive him? and if ye could multiply objections throughout eternity, why

ye ſhould not cloſe with Chriſt; ye may cut them all aſunder with his knife, *This is his Commandment*: And doth he not command you, *Mat.* 11. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour.* And *Iſai.* 55. 1. *Ho, every one that thirſteth come to the water.* Secondly, he doth regrate, and deeply reſent it, that they will not come. I think Chriſt never weeped ſo bitterly, as that day when he weeped over *Jeruſalem*, that ye would not imbrace him, *Luke* 19. 41. *If thou, even thou*, at leaſt, *in this thy day, had known the things that belong to thy peace*: And *Joh.* 5. 40. *Ye will not come to me that ye may have life.* O what think ye can be the riſe of this, that Chriſt ſhould ſorrow, becauſe ye will not give up your hearts to him; doth he increaſe his gain when ye give him your hearts? No certainly, but he cannot endure that madneſs in you; that ye ſhould forſake your only gain. Thirdly, would you do Chriſt a joyful turn, and make his heart glad? imbrace him; This is clear, *Luke* 15. 5. that when he findeth the ſheep that is going aſtray, *He returneth rejoycing.* Fourthly, I ſay no more unto you, would ye make all the perſons of the bleſſed Trinity to rejoyce, would ye make all the Angels of Heaven to ſing, would ye make all the Saints that are round about the Throne to exult for joy? then give your hearts up to Chriſt, and cloſe with him in the Covenant of promiſe; according to that word, *Song* 6. laſt verſe, *Return, return, O Shulamite, return, return, that we may look upon thee.* Four times that command is repeated, *return*, and the great argument with which he backeth it, is, That all the perſons of the Trinity may rejoyce, that *we may look upon thee.* Fourthly, conſider but how he hath condeſcended to give himſelf at a very low rate: what will ye give for Chriſt? O ſinners, what will ye give for him? would ye give the world for Chriſt? I will tell you what ye will get Chriſt for; ye will get him for a very look, *Iſai.* 45. 22. *Look unto me, O all ye ends of the earth*: And think ye not that is a matchleſs mercy, that the thirty three years ſufferings

of

of Christ, all the pains and tortures of his heart, his being under the unsupportable wrath of an offended God; the fruit of all that should be yours for a look, will ye deny that to Christ; Oh! do ye ever think to find a more down-coming market? Yea, fifthly, doth not this speak an admirable willingness to have you, he is to give you that look. It is impossible for these cursed eyes of ours, ever to give precious Christ a look, and therefore he hath promised, to give that to us, that we may give to him, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They shall look to me*, that very look ye are to get from Christ, and ye see it is within the compass of a promise. Lastly, that speaketh Christs willingness to receive & take you, that he doth not take the first refusal. O Christians that are now in Christ, if Christ had taken an hundred refusals from you, ye should never have been in heaven, but he waiteth for an answer, and doth not take us at our first word, according to that word, *Song* 5. 2. *I am wet*, saith he, *with the drops of the morning, and my locks with the dew of the night*: He was long knocking at her heart, and stayed a long time there patiently suffering all the injuries he could meet with. And I would only pose you, think ye that if one of the richest of you were suiting a very poor woman, and she refused you so many times, would your proud hearts submit to take her; and yet how oftentimes hath the precious heart of Christ submitted to many affronts, and refusals that we have given him; I think if it were possible, Christians would wink, when first they behold Christ upon the day of their espousals; For, I suppose there will be great dispute between shame and love, desire and confusion; shame will make you to close your eyes, because ye have oftimes undervalued that Prince, and yet love will not let you close them, desire will put you to look, though reflecting upon your former ways, will make you blush and be ashamed.

Thirdly, to perswade you to receive Christ in the offer of his free promises, I shall but say these three words and close, 1. Look to these excellent gifts that

Chriſt bringeth with him, he bringeth Juſtification with him, and is not that an excellent gift. He bringeth Sanctification with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth joy of the Holy Ghoſt with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth the love of God with him, and is not that an excellent gift? He bringeth patience under ſufferings with him, and is not that an excellent gift? but why ſhould I name what he bringeth? He bringeth himſelf and all things, and what would ye have more? O, but for one ſaving blink of his face, it would make your hearts lay down your enmity that you have maintained ſo long. 2. O Chriſtian, that ye may cloſe with Chriſt, do but remember the happineſs that ye will have in imbracing him, I told you not long ſince, and now I put you in mind again: There is a ſixfold Crown which ſhall be put upon your head; Would you have long life? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a Crown of eternal life: Would ye have glory? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a Crown of glory: Would ye have knowledge of the myſteries of God? then come to Chriſt, and he ſhall crown you with knowledge: Would ye have an eternal felicity, and an uninterrupted happineſs? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have an immortal Crown: Would ye have holineſs and ſanctification? then come to Chriſt, and ye ſhall have a Crown of righteouſneſs; yea, he ſhall put a royal Crown upon your head, a Crown of pure Gold; and then that word ſhall be accompliſhed to the full, *Ezek.* 9: 16. *Then ſhall they be as the ſtones of a Crown lifted up, and as an enſign upon the land.* O what a day think ye it will be, when Chriſt ſhall hold your Crowns upon his hand, and ſhall put them upon thoſe heads never to be removed again, here we are often put to ſigh out that lamentation, *The Crown is fallen from our heads, wo unto us for we have ſinned,* but there ſhall be no more ſin to make our Crown to totter. 1. I muſt tell you, There is a fourfold ſuit of apparel that ye ſhall be cloathed with ere long: ye are now cloathed with *heavineſs*, but then ye ſhall be

cloathed

cloathed with the garments of *praiſe*; And did ye ever know ſuch a robe as that? Is it not a more excellent robe, then the robes of Kings and Emperours in the earth, to be cloathed with praiſes? Many of them are, and ſhall be for ever cloathed with infamy and ſhame. 2. Ye ſhall be cloathed with change of rayment, and ſhall be brought unto the King *in rayment of needle work.* O poor Laſs and poor Lad that ſitteth upon the dung-hill, that knows not what it is to have change of apparel; ye ſhall have it in that day, when Chriſt ſhall ſolemnize the Marriage with you, ye ſhall miſken your ſelf. O Chriſtian, if ye knew your ſelf never ſo well, ye will be forced to cry out! *O, Is this I, is this I? that am now made perfect through his comlineſs.* 3. Ye ſhall be cloathed with the garments of *immortal glory*, ye that have *your foundation in the duſt, and dwell in the houſes of clay*, ye ſhall *then be cloathed with theſe excellent robes of immortality, and cloathed upon with your houſe from heaven.* And laſtly, ye ſhall be cloathed with the garment of the *ſpotleſs righteouſneſs of Chriſt.* O ſuch a majeſtick walk as ye will have, when ye ſhall have a ſcepter in one hand, and a palm in the other, theſe robes put upon your back, and theſe crowns upon your heads, and then ſhall be walking through theſe ſtreets that are paved with Gold. 4. I ſhall give you this word to think upon, that there are five things that ſhall be your exerciſe in heaven; 1. Ye ſhall be conſtantly taken up in wondering: If it be not preſumption for us to think a little; What is the exerciſe of Chriſt, and the Saints that are above, we conceive it is this, Chriſt is wondering at their beauty, and they are wondering at his beauty, Chriſt is looking upon them, and they upon him; and is it not true, that if Chriſt be now raviſhed with one of our eyes, *Song* 4. verſ. 9. much more ſhall he be raviſhed when both our eyes ſhall be given to him, and ſhall eternally behold him, without going a whooring after other lovers. 2. Ye ſhall be continually in the exerciſe of praiſe, joy and light ſhall be flowing out

eternally; ye ſhall then ſweetly warble upon theſe Harps of God, and ſhall cry, *Hallelujah unto him that ſitteth upon the Throne:* There ſhall be no diſcord there; there is a ſweet and beautiful harmony amongſt all theſe ſpiritual and heavenly Muſicians. O but to hear them it were a Heaven, though we had not that bleſſed lot as to ſing with them. 3. Ye ſhall be continually taken up in the exerciſe of Love; Faith is your predominant grace while ye are here, but Love ſhall be your predominant grace when ye are there. O! Is it not a myſtery to take up theſe ſweet emanations of Love and Delight, that ſhall paſs between Chriſt and you? ye ſhall be infolding Chriſt, and Chriſt ſhall be infolding you. 4. Ye ſhall be continually beholding him. I think it is hardly poſſible for the Wife to remember her Huſband in Heaven, though ſhe loved him as her own heart, they will all be taken up in beholding him that ſitteth upon the Throne, they will be thinking it too low an object to be taken up with looking upon another in theſe relations: all will be raviſhed beholding him, and one another in him, and for him. O the bleſſed exerciſe of theſe that are now entered within that City, and within theſe gates, whoſe Name is *Praiſe.* 5. Ye ſhall be continually taken up in beholding, ye ſhall be alwayes knowing, and yet never able to comprehend the endleſs myſteries and perfections of Jeſus Chriſt. O ſuch a ſtudy! Is it not pleaſant always to be ſtudying Chriſt? and will not theſe things perſwade you?

And now but a word more to theſe that will not have this free offer: If ye will not imbrace Chriſt and take him, let me tell you, I would not be in the ſtead of that perſon for ten thouſand worlds, if ye will not imbrace Chriſt & take him for your portion, the ſtones of the wall of this houſe will bear witneſs againſt you, and they ſhall have a tongue to ſpeak againſt you, that ye have been invited to take him, and would not: ere long that day is approaching, and drawing near, when the Atheiſts and refuſers of Chriſt,

they

they ſhall change their Faith, and they ſhall change their love, they ſhall change their Fear, and they ſhall change their joy, and they ſhall change their Mind, ye ſhall change your Faith, ye that are refuſers of Chriſt; for I know there are many that think they have cloſed with Chriſt, who never did cloſe with him; that faith ſhall flee away, and ye ſhall believe the contrary: ye ſhall change your love, or at leaſt your opinion of your love: ye think ye love Chriſt, but ye do not imbrace him; I will tell you what will be your exerciſe, and I can tell you no thing ſo terrible, Chriſt ſhall eternally hate you, and ye ſhall eternally hate Chriſt, there ſhall be a mutual hatred betwixt you two for evermore. O that dreadful word, *Zech.* 11. 8. it ſhall then be accompliſhed to the uttermoſt, *My ſoul loathed them, and their ſoul alſo abhorred me.* And ye ſhall change your fear, for now though ye fear not God, nor reverence man, yet the horrour of GOD ſhall make you ſhake as a leaf, and ye ſhall change your light and your judgement. Ye do now undervalue Chriſt, and thinks him of nothing worth; when Chriſt is preſented unto you, *there is no beauty why ye ſhould deſire him*: But O think on that day when Chriſt ſhall ſit down in the clouds, and ye ſhall ſee his beautiful face, every ray of which ſhall be able to captivate your hearts, if they were then capable to be raviſhed with the ſight. O what will be your thoughts of him? and if the bleſſings of a crucified Saviour come not upon you, then the eternal, unſupportable vengeance of Chriſt ſhall light upon your heads, that would not condeſcend to take him: ye ſhall be curſed in your life, ye ſhall be curſed in your death, and ye ſhall be curſed after death; What ſay ye to it? are ye content to take him? ye might bleſs the day that ever ye were born, if ye could once come to cloſe with Chriſt. Now to him that hath the keys of the houſe of *David*, that can open your hearts to give him entry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON

SERMON IV.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three moſt glorious and excellent gifts that God hath beſtowed upon man, there is that comprehenſive gift of Heaven *Jeſus Chriſt*, who is ſo called, *Joh.* 4. 10. and ſure ſuch a gift as that ought in ſome ſenſe to blind our eyes, and make us look upon all things that are below him, as nothing. The ſecond royal gift that the Lord hath given, is the precious promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, which are given to us thorow him: a Chriſtian that is united unto him by the blood of Faith, he may write thſs above the head of every promiſe of the everlaſting Covenant, *this is mine, and this is mine.* His third precious gift, is the gift of *Faith*, which is that grace that maketh uſe of the former two: & we conceive that our little making uſe of theſe three excellent gifts, is the great occaſion and cauſe why theſe four moſt ſad and lamentable evils have befallen us. 1. The evil of a ſilent conſcience, that though *we be profound to commit iniquity*, and do *love a reward under every green tree*, yet our conſcience doth not ſpeak, nor reprove us, and if at any time they do ſpeak, yet there are ſome that are ſo poſſeſſed with a dumb and deaf ſpirit, they can neither hear what God doth ſpeak, nor can they hear their conſcience. 2. The evil of a fierce rod, we know not the voice of our rod, *and who is he that hath appointed it?* God doth not now open *our ears to Diſcipline, nor ſeal up our inſtruction.* 3. There is that evil of *ſilent mercies*, the mercies that we receive of God, we underſtand not the language of them: are not our mercies Barbarians unto us, ſpeaking to us in an unknown tongue? and yet we may ſay, there is not a rod, nor a mercy a Chriſtian meets with, but it

hath

hath a voice, if we did underſtand it. And laſtly, there is that evil which hath befallen us; and alace, this is the capeſtone of all, *a ſilent God*, who doth not hearken unto the voice of our cryes, but turneth about the face of his Throne, *covering himſelf with a cloud in his anger*, ſo *that our prayers cannot paſs through.* Alace, may not each Chriſtian of this time cry out, *call me no more Naomi, but call me Mara, becauſe the Lord hath dealt bitterly with me.* In ſhort, I think there are theſe two things that may be our lamentation upon the high places of *Iſrael.* Firſt, that we live without ſight of God. And ſecondly, that we live without ſight of our ſelves, and all this, becauſe we live without ſight of theſe precious gifts, Chriſt and his promiſes.

But now to the words, We told you, that in them there were theſe four things holden forth concerning the promiſes. 1. The Original and fountain of the promiſes, in that word, *whereby, or by whom.* 2. The properties of the promiſes, which we told you, were theſe four. The firſt was, that the promiſes were free, holden forth in that word, they are *given*; all the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant being the noble gifts of God. The ſecond (of which) we are to ſpeak at this time, is this, that the promiſes of the Covenant, they are unchangeable, which is imported alſo in that word, *they are given*, the gifts of God being indeed without repentance; And as to this, 1. We ſhall prove the truth of the point; and for this end, conſider that place, *Numb.* 23. 19. which was a part of *Balaams* ſong, *Hath he not ſpoken it, and will he not alſo do it? Hath he ſaid it, and ſhall it not alſo come to paſs?* and Pſal. 89. 34. *I will not break my Covenant, nor alter the word that hath gone out of my mouth:* and the point is clear alſo, from the name that the promiſes getteth in Scripture, are they not called *the ſure mercies of David*, Iſal. 55. 3. and are they not ſometimes in Scripture called *Truth*, as we may ſee from *Micah* 7. 20. Thirdly, The nature of the Covenant proveth it; in that it is called *an everlaſting Covenant*, and ſometimes a *Covenant of Salt*,

because that Covenant is above the reach of alteration or putrefaction. And fourthly, It may be likewise shown from the constant experience that the Saints have had of the unchangeableness of the promises. This *Joshua* taketh notice of, *Chap.* 23, 24. where when he was a dying *There hath not failed* (saith he) *one thing of all these good things that God hath spoken*; and he is so confident of this, that he is forced to repeat that word over again in that verse, and he taketh notice of it, *Josh.* 21. 45. where he hath that same expression again, *There hath not failed* (saith he) *one thing of all the good things that God hath spoken*; and this *Solomon* he took notice of, 1 *King.* 8. 56. *There hath not failed one thing that God hath spoken unto us by Moses*: and indeed, there is near six thousand years experience that preacheth this truth, *the promises are unchangeable*. so that we may now say, *The word of the Lord is tried as silver is purified in a furnace of earth hot seven times*; If there had been any falshood in the precious promises of the everlasting Covenant, six thousand years tryal should have brought it to light; but doth not every one of the cloud of witnesses that have gone before us, leave this testimony upon record, *Faithful is he that hath promised, who will also do it*, his *promise is with the night and with the day*, it cannot be altered; the ordinances of heaven continue to this day, much less can this Covenant of love be broken or altered; only we would have you taking this Caution by the way, that there are some conditional promises that God passeth unto his people, which in the depths of his spotless wisdom, he doth not accomplish unto these who never fulfil the condition; such was that promise that he gave to the *Israelites* in the land of *Egypt*, of their possessing the land of *Canaan*, who yet died in the wilderness. And hence is that strange word, *Numb.* 14. 34. *Ye shall know my breach of promise, saith the Lord*, which is a word spoken after the manner of men, not importing any change of purpose in God, but only shewing, that because they did not

believe,

believe, and ſo fulfil the condition of the promiſe, therefore it was not to be fulfilled perſonally to them.

The ſecond thing that we ſhall ſpeak to upon this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhall be to propoſe theſe ſix golden pillars and excellent foundations, upon which the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes is built. And the firſt of them is, *the Omnipotency of God*, that there is nothing that he hath promiſed, but he is able to effectuate and to bring to paſs; Therefore, 2 *Cor.* 6. 18. when God had been paſſing many excellent promiſes, he ſtrengthneth their faith with this, *Thus ſaith the Lord God Almighty*; and no doubt *where the word of this King is, there is power, and who can ſay unto him, what doſt thou?* O miſbeliever of the precious promiſes of the Covenant; be aſhamed to caſt up your eyes to heaven above, or to the earth beneath; we think the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, and all the works of God, they may ſpeak our that to you, do not miſbelieve God, but truſt in him, *that is wonderful in counſel, and excellent in working.* The ſecond is, the wiſdom and infinite counſel of God, he hath not only compleat ability to accompliſh the promiſes that he hath given, but he hath the depths and treaſures of knowledge, by which he hath contrived the way of the accompliſhment of ſuch a promiſe. Hence is that word, 2 *Sam.* 23. 5. that the Covenant is *well ordered*, which ſpeaketh out the wiſdom of God; and then that word is ſubjoyned, the Covenant *is ſure*; yea, the Covenant of Grace is ſuch a thing, that there is ſo much of the Art of Heaven, ſo much of infinite wiſdom ſhining in it, that it is called *the Counſel of God*, Heb. 6 17. *That ye might know the immutability of his counſel.* The third golden pillar, is *the infinite love of God*, that though there be nothing in us that can put him to accompliſh the promiſes, yet he will take an argument from his own love, to make out ſuch a promiſe to us; that there is ſometimes (if not alwayes) nothing in us, but that which may ſpeak forth delays of the accompliſhment of the promiſes; but when God can bring no argument from

us,

us, he can bring an argument from his own love, as *Deut.* 7. 7, 8. where giving a reaſon of the accompliſhment of many promiſes, and of his love to them, *I loved you*, ſaith he, *becauſe I loved you*; there being no reaſon that can be given for love, but love. The fourth is, *The unchangeableneſs of the promiſer*, that he is the ſame, yeſterday, and to day, and for ever, and without all alteration and ſhadow of change: Hence ye may ſee, *Exod.* 3. 14. when God is repeating many precious promiſes unto *Moſes*, He (as it were) ſtrengtheneth *Moſes* faith with this, *I am* ſaith he, *that I am*, which we conceive to point forth the unchangeableneſs of God, that what he hath ſaid, he will certainly accompliſh in its own time, and though *the viſion do tarry, yet at laſt it ſhall ſpeak*. The fifth is, *the faithfulneſs of God*, and that he is one that cannot lie, but certainly will make out what he hath ſpoken. Love, it maketh the promiſes, the faithfulneſs and power of God accompliſheth the promiſes, and the infinite wiſdom of God chooſeth the moſt fit time for the performing of them. Hence it is ſaid, *Pſal.* 119. 89, 90. *Thy word, O Lord, is for ever ſettled in heaven*, and the ground of it is in the following verſe; *For thy faithfulneſs is unto all generations.* Hence you may ſee, that oftentimes when God is making promiſes to his own, he putteth to that word, *I that ſpeaketh in righteouſneſs*, Iſai. 45. and *Iſai.* 63. 1. O! muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are made by the Father, who is the God of truth? Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable that are received and merited by the Son, that is Truth it ſelf, and the *faithful witneſs*, and *Amen?* Muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable, that are applyed by the Holy Ghoſt, that is the *Spirit of Truth?* And muſt not the promiſes be unchangeable, that are made known unto us by the Goſpel: that is *the word of Truth?* Was there ever any who could leave that upon record of God, that he was unfaithful in the accompliſhment of his promiſes. O what a clear ſight of the faithfulneſs of God ſhall a Chriſtian get, when he

he ſhall be ſtanding upon the utmoſt line between Time and Eternity, then he will ſee God faithful in accompliſhing all his promiſes unto him from firſt to laſt. The laſt golden pillar is, *The Juſtice of God*; His juſtice, it now putteth him to accompliſh his promiſes, mercy and righteouſneſs have now kiſſed each other: Hence is that word, 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. *He is juſt and faithful to forgive*; So that now the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is not only an act of love, but it is an act of juſtice alſo; We confeſs indeed, love and mercy maketh the promiſes, but juſtice and truth alſo putteth God to the accompliſhment of them. Hence is that word, Micah 7. 20. *To perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham.* Why is it mercy to *Abraham*, and it is truth to *Jacob?* It is in ſhort this, becauſe mercy made the promiſes to *Abraham*, but truth did accompliſh the promiſes to *Jacob?*

The third thing that we ſhall ſpeak to from this, That the promiſes are unchangeable, ſhall be, to preſs theſe ſix duties upon you from this point.

O Chriſtians and Expectants of Heaven, who have Chriſt in you, the hope of Glory, rejoyce and be exceeding glad that the promiſes are unchangeable. 1. This is a duty that is preſſed from that ground, *Heb.* 6. 18. *That by two immutable things we might have ſtrong conſolation*: There is exceeding much joy that may come to a Chriſtian from this, that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed in their own time. We conceive that the word *unchangeable*, it is engraven upon the head of many a Chriſtians mercies. Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of your promiſes? Is not *unchangeable* written upon the head of our bleſſedneſs? Is not *unchangeable* written above the head of our enjoyment of God? That day is coming when we ſhall have *unchangeable* love, *unchangeable* enjoyment of God, and all things *unchangeable*: And we conceive, that if theſe two were believed, the truth of the promiſes, and the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes, a Chriſtian might walk through this valley of tears with joy, and comfort himſelf in hope:

The ſecond duty we would preſs, is this, that ye would ſurceaſe, and give over your diſputings and carnal reaſonings about the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ſince the promiſes of God are unchangeable, ought not we with this to ſilence miſbelief and all that blind humane reaſon can ſay: This is preſſed, *Heb.* 6.16. *An oath for confirmation, it is an end of all ſtrife,* Gods confirming of his Covenant by an oath, it ought to cut ſhort the diſputings of miſbelief; And here give me leave to point out a little theſe grounds, upon which it is that Chriſtians doth ſo much diſpute the accompliſhment of the promiſes, and to let you ſee how all theſe grounds may be anſwered from theſe ſix pillars that were given of their unchangeableneſs.

The firſt is, when diſpenſations ſeemeth to contradict the truth of the promiſes, the promiſe, it ſpeaketh one thing, and diſpenſations ſeem to ſpeak another, and this is the occaſion that oftentimes a Chriſtian crys out, *Doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* This is clear from the practice of *David*, 1 *Sam.* 27. 1. when diſpenſations were upon the top of the accompliſhment, and truth of the promiſes, then miſbelief it ariſeth as a champion mighty to war, and cryeth out, *I ſhall one day fall by the hand of Saul*: And we conceive, that diſpenſations contradicting the truth of the promiſes, was the occaſion of his ſpeaking that word, *Pſal.* 119. 11. *I ſaid in my haſte, all men are liars.* And I would only ſay to you that diſpute the truth of the promiſes upon this account, that diſpenſations contradicteth them: Do but conſider this; God in his way is not like unto you; Would ye know the time when the promiſes are neareſt their accompliſhment, it is then when we can leaſt ſee that they are to be accompliſhed, the promiſes are never nearer their performance, then when we think that they are fartheſt off from it; And therefore let the faith of the Omnipotency of God, uphold your ſpirit under ſuch a debate, then let diſpenſations ſpeak what they will, ye may anſwer all with this, *There is nothing too hard for him,* there is nothing too hard

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for the Lord. I grant this may try the ſtrength of the ſtrongeſt faith, yea, we find it hath made the beſt to ſtagger when they had no probabilities to tell them that the promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed, this was the ground of *Sarahs* misbelief, *Gen.* 18.12. that when ſhe heard that ſhe ſhould bear a ſon in her old age, ſhe laughed within her ſelf, and did as it were, mock at ſuch a promiſe; and this was the ground of *Moſes*, his misbelief, *Numb.* 11. 21, 22. he did not ſee a probability that ſuch a multitude ſhould be fed with fleſh, and therefore he did call in queſtion the truth of that promiſe; this was the ground of the misbelief of that lord that is made mention of, 2 *King.* 7. 2. and this was the ground of *Zacharies* misbelief, *Luke* 1. 20. But I would only ſay to you that do ſo much conſult with probability in the exerciſe of your faith, theſe two things. 1. There is nothing too hard for God this was the very argument that God took to convince *Sarah*, in the 14. verſe of that 18. Chapter, *Is there any thing too hard for God?* And, 2. Faith is never in its native and ſpiritual exerciſe, till once probability contradict the truth of the promiſe, then faith, it is put upon the ſtage, then faith doth act; but as long as faith and probabilities think one thing, then the day of the tryal of the ſtrength of faith is not yet come.

The ſecond ground upon which Chriſtians diſpute the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is their much diſputing of their intereſt in God; ſometime a Chriſtian will believe a promiſe, and before the accompliſhment of the promiſe come, their hope will be darkned, their intereſt in Chriſt will be obſcured, and then they do quite their faith in adhering to the truth of that promiſe. Theſe two are joyned together, want of the faith of our intereſt, and want of the faith of the accompliſhment of the promiſe, as is clear from that word, *Pſal.* 77. 8. *Is his mercy clean gone?* There is diſputing of his intereſt, and preſently this is ſubjoyned, *doth his promiſe fail for evermore?* Except a Chriſtian can read his name in the ancient records of heaven, and can ſeal this concluſion, *I am my beloveds, and my*

beloved

beloved is mine, it will be a hard, and a difficult task for him, if not impossible to believe the promises.

The fourth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, their mistaking the way how the promises are to be accomplished, there are some that suppose that when ever they close with a promise by faith, there is no more but to enter to the possession of such a promise; but do not mistake it, between your believing the promise, and the accomplishment of it, there may be sad and dark days interveening, according to that word in *Mark* 10. 30. where Christ, passing great promises to his Disciples, He, as it were doth add, do not mistake me, that ye shall have these promises without trouble and affliction, *Ye shall receive* (saith he) *an hundred fold in this life with persecutions.* A Christian when he believeth the promises, he must resolve to have a winter before the spring time come, wherein the promise shall bud and flourish.

The fifth ground of a Christians disputing the truth of the promises, is, when the promises are long in their accomplishing. A Christian when first he meeteth with a promise, he will cry forth, *O believe*, but when time is taken for the accomplishment of it, then his faith beginneth to faint, and his hope beginneth to languish and give over; yet, sometimes Christians they fall into this fault, when they believe a promise, they fix a day for the accomplishment of it; which, if God do not keep, but go over; then they immediately cry forth, *what is my strength that I should wait? and what is my confidence that I should prolong my days?* This is clear in the practice of *Abraham*, where the promise of having a numerous seed being given to him, *Gen.* 12. 2. the long time before that promise was accomplished in part to him, was the occasion of his misbelief, that he vented, *Gen.* 15. 3. *O Lord, what wilt thou give me since I go childless.* But ye must know that before the *vision shall speak*, there is an appointed time that ye must wait, according to 1 *Pet.* 5. 9, 10. *After ye have suffered a while*, then the promises

promiſes ſhall be accompliſhed, and ye ſhall be made perfect.

The ſixth ground upon which Chriſtians call in queſtion the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is, The conſideration of the greatneſs of the thing that is promiſed, when they compare it with their own worth and deſerving, then they begin to diſpute, *O ſhall ſuch a thing be*, ſhall unworthy I, ſhall ſinful I, ſhall ſelf-deſtroying I, ſhall I that am *leſs then the leaſt of his mercies*, receive the accompliſhment of ſuch a mercy? this we may ſuppoſe was one ground of *Abrahams* miſbelief, *Gen.* 17. 17. when he cryed forth at that ſame time, when the Lord was giving him the excellent promiſe of an *Iſaac*, *O that Iſhmael might live*: he thought an *Iſaac* ſuch an excellent mercy, that he could not without preſumption, expect the accompliſhment of that promiſe; and in *Zech.* 8. 6. this was the ground of their miſbelief, which God doth ſweetly obviate, *If it be wonderful in the eyes of the remnant of his people in theſe days, ſhould it alſo be wonderful in mine?*

The laſt ground upon which a Chriſtian diſputes the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is, when in the time between their believing and the accompliſhment of the promiſe, they fall into ſome groſs iniquity, this maketh them exceedingly debate whether the promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed unto them; for ſince they have tranſgreſſed the Covenant of God, and have broken their purpoſes and reſolutions, they cannot ſuppoſe God will abide faithful to them; and once accompliſh his promiſe unto them, and the only way how to anſwer this diſpute, is, to look to the faithfulneſs of God, and uſe that word, 2 *Tim.* 2. 13. *Though we believe not, yet God doth abide faithful, he cannot deny himſelf.*

And now to ſhut up this ſecond duty that we preſs from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes; I ſhall only ſay theſe two words unto you; 1. Aſſure your ſelves of this, that theſe accompliſhments of the promiſes that come not through the lively exerciſe of Faith, doth loſe much of their ſweetneſs, much of

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their luſter, and much of their advantage: ſometimes a promiſe will be accompliſhed unto a Chriſtian, when he hath not been much in the conſtant and lively exercise of Faith in believing ſuch a promiſe; but then the diſadvantages that attendeth ſuch a one, are not eaſily expreſſed: how often may he cry out, *The Lord was in this place, and I was not aware*: how little of God doth he ſee in it? how ſhort is he in praiſes and rendering to the Lord according to the good he hath received? how negligent in improving or keeping the mercy, and how loath to lay it out for God, when he ſaith, *the Lord hath need of it*. and many things more of this kind, which may preſs us to be ſtedfaſt in believing. And, 2 O diſpute leſs, and believe more, what profit ſhall you have of your diſputings? and if ye would produce all your ſtrong arguments, why ye ſhould not believe the promiſes, ye may drown them in this immenſe depth, *God is unchangeable.* Let me ſay but this further, there are three moſt remarkable changes in a Chriſtian, in his making uſe of the promiſes: Firſt, Sometime he will believe the promiſes, and make application of them, and ere many hours go about, he will misbelieve that promiſe, which preſently he believed. Will not ſometime a Chriſtian in the morning cry out, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*, and ere twelve hours come, they will change their note, and cry out, *My hope and my ſtrength is periſhed from the Lord*: Sometimes a Chriſtian in the morning will cry out, *My mountain ſtandeth ſtrong I ſhall never be moved* and ere many hours go about, he will change his note, and cry out, *Thou haſt hid thy face from me, and I was troubled.* Secondly, Sometimes a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *ſweeter then the honey and the honey comb*: Sometimes a Chriſtian will die and live upon the promiſe; Sometimes the believing of a promiſe will be to a Chriſtian *as the valley of Achor for a door of hope*, that will make him to ſing, and yet ere many days go about, he may come to that ſame very promiſe, and it will prove taſteleſs to him as the *white of an egg*; ſo that he may

cry

cry out, *O that it were with me as in months paſt, and in the ancient times* : And O where is the ſweetneſs that I found in ſuch a promiſe ; O, it is gone, it is gone, and I am left deſolate. Thirdly, Sometimes when a Chriſtian will be believing ſuch a promiſe, and reſting upon it, he will (through the Spirit of the Lord) ſee much light and clearneſs in that promiſe, he will take up the *deep things of God* that ſhineth therein : and at another time he may come to that ſame promiſe, and it may be dark to him, ſo that his light hath evaniſhed : and ſometimes the joy of a Chriſtian in the promiſe will be gone, when his light that he had in it, may remain with him. A Chriſtian may come to the promiſe, and find his ancient light, yet not his ancient joy, nor his ancient delight. Therefore, if ye would have the promiſes always ſweet unto you, pray over them, pray that God might breathe upon ſuch a promiſe, and make it lively unto you.

The third thing that we would preſs upon you from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſe , is, that which by proportion ye may gather even from this, that the threatnings of God are *unchangeable* ; theſe two are conjoyned ; yea, *Joſhuah* ſeemeth to infer the unchangeableneſs of the threatnings from the unchangeableneſs of the promiſes, *Chap.* 23. 14. compared with *verſ* 15. and theſe two are conjoyned, *Zech* 8. 14 15. *That as I thought to puniſh you, and it hath come to paſs ſo I have thought to build you up, and it ſhall come to paſs.* And I would from this, deſire you to ſtand in awe, leſt you come under the laſh of unchangeable threatnings of God ; for know that as God is unchangeable in the promiſes, and there is not one word in all the everlaſting Covenant that ſhall not be accompliſhed ; ſo likewiſe know, there is not a curſe in all the Book of the Covenant. but it ſhall be accompliſhed in its time : And know this likewiſe, that the day is coming when that ſad word, that is in *Hoſ.* 7. 12. ſhall be accomplished *I will chaſtiſe them as their congregation hath heard* And, O ye that live in this place, if all the threatnings that your Congre-

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gations hath heard, ſhall be accompliſhed in their time, ye may taken up the laſt words of *Balaams* ſong, alace, *Who ſhall live when God ſhall do theſe things?* And therefore, ſince the threatnings of God are unchangeable, as alſo the promiſes, life and death is ſet before you: and either ye ſhall be the object of the unchangeable threatnings of God; or ye muſt be the object of the unchangeable promiſes of God: And therefore, I would from this charge you, that as you would not be helpful to the deſtruction of your own immortal ſouls, you would not undervalue the threatnings that ye hear in your congregations, ſince there is a declaration paſt, that the threatnings in your congregations ſhall be accompliſhed.

Now there is that fourth duty that we would preſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are unchangeable, have an unchangeable love to the *Promiſer*; let this commender the *Promiſer*, let this conſtrain your heart to delight in the *Promiſer*. O what a bleſſed diſpenſation of love is this, that an unchangeable God ſhould make unchangeable promiſes unto changeable creatures. If the promiſes of the covenant of grace were as changeable in their nature, as we are changeable, there ſhould not one of us go to Heaven; but know it is the bleſſed deſign of love, and it hath been a bleſſed practice of the infinite wiſdom of God, that when he hath to do with changeable creatures, he will give them unchangeable promiſes. And I would once invite you again, that you would come near and imbrace this *unchangeable Promiſer*; I ſhall ſpeak theſe five words that may perſwade you. 1. Chriſt is eaſily to be gotten if ye will but take him, ye will get Chriſt if you will but hear, yea, for one liſtning of your ear to his voice ye ſhall get him; according to that word, *Iſa.* 55. 31. *hear*, And what of that? *and your ſouls ſhall live*; is not this to get Chriſt at an eaſie rate? and as we ſpake before, ye will get Chriſt for a look, and is not that an eaſie rate? *Iſa.* 45. 22. *Look unto me all ye ends of the earth and be ſaved*; Have ye a deſire to take Chriſt, ye ſhall get him for that deſire; according to

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that word, Iſa. 55. 1. *Ho every one that thirſteth let him come, and he that will let him come:* Will ye but conſent to take him, ye ſhall have him, and what can ye have at a lower rate then this? ſhall never your curſed hands take the pen and put to your name to the bleſſed contract of Marriage? ſhall never theſe curſed hearts of your cry forth, *Even ſo I take Him*, and do promiſe to live to him, and to die to him. O ſtrange, will ye not do it? upon what terms would the world have Chriſt, is it poſſible to have him without a conſent to take him? Oh, if ye would but open to him, he would condeſcend to come in into you, and to ſup with you, and ye with him; do ye but ſtir to open, Chriſt hath the Keys in his own hand, and he would help you to open. O what if Chriſt, the precious Gift of Heaven, the eternal admiration of Angels, that branch of Righteouſneſs ſhall be deſpiſed, being offered upon ſo eaſie terms, then curſed eternally ſhall be that perſon that thus undervalueth Chriſt, it had been better for him that he had never been born; curſed ſhall ye be in your birth, and in your life, and in your death; all the curſes of the perſons of the Trinity will light upon you, yea, believe it; O Wife that hath a believing Huſband in the day that the great ſentence of eternal excommunication from the preſence of the Lord, ſhall be paſt againſt the undervaluers of Chriſt, a believing Husband will ſay Amen to that ſentence, even to his wife that did thus undervalue that Noble Plant of Renown; and the Wife upon the other part, will ſay with hearty conſent, Amen to that ſentence againſt the unbelieving Husband, and the Father to the Son, and the Son to the Father.

Now there is this fifth duty that we would preſs upon you from this, That the promiſes are unchangeable, that ye would be perſwaded to make the promiſes your portion and your inheritance; What can ye want that will choiſe the promiſes for your portion? I know, our curſed eyes doth not love to make inviſible promiſes, and that inviſible crown, and an inviſible God our portion, we look to walk by ſight, not

not by faith. But oh, if you knew once what it were but to claim a relation to Chriſt! did ye once know what it were to have but Chriſt a moment between your breaſts, ye would cry forth, O! *Who would not love him who is the King of Saints?* O! who would not be content to quite all things that they might get Chriſt that noble Pearl of price?

And there is this laſt duty that we would preſs upon you from this, that the promiſes are *unchangeable*; read a lecture from this, O Chriſtian, even your miſbelief; God hath confirmed his everlaſting Covenant with *an oath*, with the *Bloud of his Son*, by the two great bread Seals of Heaven, *the Sacrament of Baptiſm and the Lords Supper*; and what doth all theſe confirmations ſpeak but our dreadful miſbelief, and that we know not what it is to be reſting on a naked word of promiſe. I ſhall ſay no more, but deſire that ye would conſider and take notice of theſe three; Firſt, Ye have been ſolemnly, and often invited by the Ambaſſadors of Chriſt to cloſe with him, and to take him for your Husband and your Lord, and will you conſider preſently, that all the Angels in Heaven, and all that are about the Throne, and the three moſt glorious, moſt bleſſed Perſons of the Trinity, that they are witneſſes, and ſhall be to your diſſent, and are there not many here whoſe hearts could never be brought up to give a hearty conſent to cloſe with Chriſt, that is the great Promiſer, and who hath laid all the bonds that Heaven or Earth could contrive to gain ſinners hearts to himſelf: O precious Chriſt, what could he do to perſwade us to love him, which he hath not done; and yet that may be your name, which is in *Epheſ.* 2. 2. *Children of diſobedience.* Or as the word is, Children of *Imperſwaſion*, we cannot be perſwaded. Secondly, I fear if Chriſt himſelf would come from Heaven and invite you. and ſay, here am I, imbrace me, there are ſome here who would cloſe not only their eyes, but their ears, they would cloſe their eyes, leſt the beauty of Chriſt ſhould allure them, they would cloſe their curled ears, leſt they ſhould be gained,

ed, and captivate by the ſweet enchaunting voice of that bleſſed Charmer, when he ſhould charm ſo wiſely. And, laſtly, will thou tell me, O Chriſtian and expectant of Heaven, what a day ſhall it be when all the unchangeable promiſes of God ſhall be accompliſhed? What a day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *ye ſhall ſee him as he is*? What a day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *ye ſhall be made like unto him*? What a day ſhall it be when that promiſe ſhall be accompliſhed, *Ye ſhall know as ye are known*? O! are ye not longing for the day of the full accompliſhment of the precious promiſes of God, when ye ſhall ſit down and comfort your ſelves in the eternal and unſpeakable fruition of them? O let us long and wait till the day ſhall be when the voice ſhall be heard in Heaven, that *the myſteries of God are finiſhed.* till the day when that voice ſhall be heard in Heaven, *Behold, the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him.* O how unwilling are we to leave a world. And how badly would we take up our reſt on this ſide of *Jordan.* I think if this were the night that that bleſſed voice were to be heard in Heaven, *Behold the Bride-groom cometh, go ye out to meet him*: ſome, if not many of the Chriſtians (that are ſo indeed) in this time, would cry forth, *O ſpare a little that we may recover ſtrength, before we go hence and ſhall be no more.* Are ye not longing to bring the King over *Jordan*, and to bring him home to your ſelf, and to have your heart brought home to him? O bleſſed, bleſſed are thoſe that are above, *Is not the voice of theſe that ſhout for victory*, heard amongſt them? Is not the voice of theſe *that ſing for joy. heard among them*? *Job* doth not now any more complain, *Why doſt thou make me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth, and ſetteth a print upon my heels*? *David* doth now no more complain, *Why doth thy promiſe fail for evermore*? but rather doth ſweetly ſing *How is thy promiſe fulfilled for evermore*? *Heman* doth now no more complain, *While I ſuffer thy terrours I am diſtracted*: but rather cry out, *While I feel thy comforts, I am raviſhed.* The voice of

mourning

mourning is now ſweetly gone away, and the voice of Hallelujah and of eternal praiſing of him that ſitteth upon the throne, is now heard in the place of it: O, ſuch a day that ſhall never admit of a following night. Now to him that is upon his way, that will come, and ſhall come, and ſhall not tarry, we deſire to give praiſe.

SERMON V.

2 Pet. 1. 4. *whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious Promiſes, that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.*

THere are three cardinal and excellent Graces that are exerciſed and taken up with the precious promiſes, there is the excellent grace of Faith, that believeth the truth and the goodneſs of the promiſe; there is the precious grace of Hope, that with Patience waiteth for the accompliſhment of the promiſe, and doth ſtay until the viſion ſpeak: and that noble grace of Love, that loveth the thing that is promiſed; and taketh exceeding much delight in the *Promiſer*. If we may be allowed to ſpeak ſo, we think theſe ſtrange revolutions and times we live in, are another *Eccleſiaſtes*, which doth fully preach forth the vanity and emptineſs of all things that are below God; and we do indeed conceive, that it is the great deſign of God, in the darkning of our pleaſant things, and in making *every gourd to wither*, under the ſhadow of which we uſe to repoſe our ſelf, and in *famiſhing all the gods of the earth*, to bring his own to delight themſelves in this inviſible treaſure; *the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant*, and in him who is the ſubſtance of them; and that ſince all things elſe are declared to be vanity, we might choiſe theſe as our own portion for ever.

At the laſt occaſion that we ſpake upon theſe words, we

we were ſpeaking unto the properties of the promiſe; and we told you that there were four of them holden forth; 1. *The freedom of the promiſes.* 2. *The unchangeableneſs of the promiſes*, of which two we have ſpoken unto you; and now there remaineth other two to be ſpoken to, to wit, that the promiſes are *exceeding great*, and that they are *exceeding precious*, a ſweet and excellent, though a rare conjunction, greatneſs and goodneſs here kiſſing one another, preciouſneſs and highneſs linked together by the bond of Union; And we ſhall ſpeak unto theſe two properties together, and ſhall clear a little this thing, in what reſpects the promiſes of the Covenant may be called exceeding great and precious; and we conceive in ſhort, they may be called ſo in theſe eight reſpects; 1. They are exceeding great, in reſpect of the great price that was laid down to purchaſe them, there not being a promiſe of the everlaſting Covenant above the head of which this may not be ingraven in great letters, *here is the price and purchaſe of blood*; and no doubt this ought highly to commend the promiſes, that are bought at ſo infinite a rate. Muſt they not be great and precious things, that ſo wiſe a Merchant did lay down ſo infinite a treaſure for the purchaſing of them. 2. They may be called exceeding great and precious, in reſpect of theſe great and precious things that are promiſed in them: Is not godlineſs a great thing, and this is within the boſome of a promiſe? Is not Heaven, an eternal enjoyment of God a great and precious thing? and yet this lyeth within the boſome of a promiſe; Is not the knowing of God as he is, our perfect conformity with God, our victory over Idols, great and excellent things? and yet all theſe are treaſured up in the promiſes. 3. They may be called exceeding great and precious in reſpect of the great advantage that redounds to a Chriſtian through the enjoyment of them: the promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, (if ſo we may ſpeak) are the Penſils that draws the draughts and lineaments of the image of Chriſt upon the ſoul, it is the promiſes

of the everlaſting Covenant, by which *we are changed from glory to glory, as it were by the ſpirit of the Lord*; and as *Peter* doth here ſpeak, the promiſes are ſuch things, whereby we are made *partakers of the divine nature.* 4. They may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect of that near relation that they have unto Jeſus Chriſt; what are all the promiſes of the Covenant of Grace? are they not ſtreams and rivolets that flow from Jeſus Chriſt? Chriſt is the fountain out of which all theſe promiſes do ſpring; and can this fountain that is ſweet in it ſelf, ſend forth any bitter waters? muſt they not be precious things that have ſuch a noble deſcent? as the ſtreams of love flowing out from the Father to the Son, and from him unto us, as the pouring out of the ointment upon the head of *Aaron*, which ran down the head unto the ſkirts of his garments. 5. They may be called exceeding precious promiſes, in reſpect they, or rather Chriſt in them, are the object of precious faith; what is the meat upon which faith doth feed? Is it not upon the promiſes of the Covenant, and Chriſt the kernel of them? What are theſe things that faith taketh ſo much delight in, and is ſupported by? Is it not the promiſes of the Covenant. 6. They may be called exceeding precious, in that they are the things that guideth and leadeth us to precious Chriſt. There is not a promiſe within the Book of the Covenant, but, as it were, it cryeth forth with a loud voice, O come to Chriſt; the promiſes are indeed the Star that leadeth us unto the houſe where Chriſt doth ly, and there is no acceſs unto Jeſus Chriſt, but by a promiſe. Chriſt is to be found there, for he dwells within the bounds of the everlaſting Covenant, and there he will tryſt with his people, and be found of them. And 7. They may be called exceeding precious, in reſpect that the Saints have found ſuch ſweetneſs, and ſuch unſpeakable delight in the promſes. Did not *David* find a great ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he cryeth forth, *The words of thy mouth are better unto me, then thouſands of gold and ſilver*; Did he not find much ſweetneſs in the promiſes, when he was conſtrained

ſtained to cry out, *Thy Law is ſweeter unto me, then the honey and the honey comb*; *David* in a manner, was put to a nonplus, to find out any ſuitable ſimilitude and ſignificant reſemblance, to point out the ſweetneſs of the promiſes, though we may ſee the Chriſtians of this time in a ſpiritual feaver, they have loſt their ſpiritual taſte, ſo that we may ſay, if we may allude unto that word, 2 *Sam.* 19. 25. *I am this day fourſcore years old, and cannot diſcern between good and evil, can thy ſervant taſte what I eat, or what I drink?* They know not what it is to be overcome with the ſweetneſs that is to be found in theſe excellent ſtreams of divine conſolation. Laſtly, the promiſes may be called exceeding precious, in that the Saints have a high and matchleſs account of them: Hence that word here rendered *precious*, may likewiſe be rendered *Honourable*, which ſpeakerh forth that there is nothing that hath ſo much of the eſteem of a Chriſtian as the promiſes. Would ye put wiſdom, or riches, or honour, or what ye will in the ballance with the promiſes, they would cry forth, what ſhould I profit to gain all theſe, if I loſe the promiſes? We ſhall ſay no more of this, but that the promiſes are indeed that apple, the eating of which would make us in ſome reſpect, (and in humility be it ſpoken) *as God, knowing good and evil*: The promiſes are theſe things that doth elevate the ſoul unto a divine conformity with God. And, oh, that this might be the fruit of them, the promiſes are as cords let down to ſouls ſinking in the *myrie clay, and in the horrible pit*: do but lay hold upon them, and ye ſhall undoubtedly be drawn up, and ye ſhall ſet *your feet upon the rock, and order all your goings.*

Now we come to ſpeak of the third thing in the words: which is the advantage and unſpeakable gain that floweth to a Chriſtian through the promiſes, holden forth in theſe words, *That by him ye might be made partakers of the divine nature*; which words doth not hold forth that there is any ſubſtantial change of our natures unto the Eſſence of God; but only it holds forth this, that the ſoul that is taken up

in believing of the promiſes, they ariſe unto a likeneſs and conformity to him in Holineſs, Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs. And as to theſe advantages that come to a Chriſtian through the promiſes. 1. We muſt lay this for a ground, that the fruit of all cometh to him, through believing the promiſes, and in making application of them.

And the firſt is, That they do exceedingly help and promove that excellent neceſſary work of mortification: this is clear from the words of the Text; As likewiſe from 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of the Lord.* And the influence that the Promiſes have upon Sanctification, may be ſhown unto you in theſe three, Firſt, They lay upon a Chriſtian a divine bond and obligation to ſtudy holineſs, that ſince Chriſt hath ſignified and teſtified his reſpects unto us, in ſo ample and large a way, as to give us ſuch precious promiſes, we ought to endeavour to ſtudy holineſs, which is that great reward of Love that he ſeeketh from us, for all things that he hath beſtowed, and we receive, and this is the meaning of that, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. Secondly, The ſtrength and furniture of a Chriſtian for fulfilling and accompliſhing of the work of Sanctification, lieth within the promiſes: Are not the promiſes of God unto a Chriſtian, as *Sampſons* locks, in which their great ſtrength doth ly? and if once they cut themſelves off from the promiſes, through miſbelief their ſtrength doth decay, & they become as other men. Where muſt the Chriſtian go to for ſtrength? Is it not to the promiſes? Is it not to the Name of the Lord? yea, this is the ſtrength of a Chriſtian unto which he muſt reſort continually. And, Thirdly, the promiſes of God they hold forth that unſpeakable reward that attendeth that Chriſtian that ſhall ſtudy holineſs. There are ſeveral promiſes of the everlaſting Covenant, that cryeth forth to the Chriſtian, to him that overcometh will this promiſe be accompliſhed, to him that overcometh will this truth be

fulfilled,

fulfilled, and this doth exceedingly provoke a Christian to wrestle with all his discouragements he meeteth with in the way, he burleth all his anxieties within the circle of his immortal Crown, which he hopeth for, and seeth in the promise, and his hope maketh him dispense with his wants, his expectation maketh him overcome his fears, and his looked for joy, maketh him to dispense with his sorrows.

The second advantage is, That the faith of the promises do help a Christian to a spiritual and heavenly performance of the duty of prayer, and withall, maketh him delight in the performance of it: this is clear from 2 *Sam.* 7. 27. where *David* believing the promises, it is subjoyned, *He found in his heart to pray that prayer unto God*; and if any will look into the words of that prayer, they will see them running in a heavenly and spiritual strain, speaking of him as one much acquainted with God, and under most high and majestick apprehensions of his Glory; and is clear also, Psal. 119 147. *I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cryed*; and as if *David* had said, would you know what made me thus fervent, diligent in prayer, It was that, I hoped in his Word; and hence it is, that he hath so many prayers in that *Psalm*, all were occasioned through the faith of the promises, as for instance, when he cryed forth, *Quicken me according to thy word, be merciful unto me according to thy word.* We conceive the faith of the promises helpeth a Christian in his prayer to these four divine ingredients of that duty. 1. It maketh him to pray with faith when once he buildeth his prayer upon the promises, then he ventureth his prayer with much confidence of hope, according to that word, *Psal.* 65. 3. where ye may see a man believing, and praying when he is believing, and expressing his confidence most strangely in these words, *As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away*; it is not said, *thou wilt purge them away*, or we desire that thou should purge them away, but *thou shalt*, which speaketh forth both the confidence of faith, and the boldness of faith. A Christian that

believeth the promiſes, he can take the promiſe in his hand, and preſent it unto God, and ſay, fulfil this promiſe, ſince thou wilt not deny thy Name, but art faithful. 2. It maketh a Chriſtian pray with much humility, for when he doth underſtand that there is nothing that he hath, but it is the fruit and accompliſhment of a promiſe, he doth not boaſt as thoſe that have received, but walketh humbly under his enjoyments: this is clear, *Gen.* 31. 10. where we may ſee *Jacob* ſpeaking to God with much humility, and in the ninth verſe, he is ſpeaking to God in much Faith. And 3. It maketh a Chriſtian pray with much love: would ye know the great ground that we are ſo remiſs in the exerciſe of love in prayer, it is becauſe we build not our prayers upon the promiſes. And 4. It helpeth a Chriſtian to pray with much fervency; when was it that *David* cryed to God? was it not when he was believing the promiſe that was paſt to him of old, we would not plead with God with ſuch remiſsneſs, if we did believe the promiſes that are within the Covenant.

The third advantage is, That the faith of the promiſes doth ſometimes uphold a Chriſtian under his ſpiritual deſertions and tentations. Is it not certain, that ſometimes he hath been ready to draw that concluſion, I am caſt out of his ſight, and ſhall no more behold him in the land of the living? when a promiſe that hath been born in upon his ſpirit, hath ſupported him, and made him to change his ſong, and to invert his concluſion. This is clear from *Pſal.* 94. 18. when I ſaid, *my foot ſlippeth*, there is the concluſion of miſbelief and deſpair, yet thy mercy, O Lord, *did hold me up*, there is the gate at which Faith doth bring in conſolation, not from by-gone experiences only; but certainly from that which he found in ſome precious promiſes that was born in upon his ſpirit: Many excellent cords of love hath Chriſt let down unto a ſoul, when they have been going down into the depths, and the weeds have been wrapt about their heads: it is clear likewiſe from *Pſal.* 119. 81. *My ſoul fainteth for thy ſalvation*: as if *David* had ſaid, I am

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in hazard to give over my hope, and to break my confidence: And would ye know what was it that ſupported me under ſuch an eſtate, *I hoped in thy word*; Hath not this oftentimes been the ſong of a Chriſtian in their darkeſt night, *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts do delight my ſoul*: Faith will ſee a morning approaching in the time of the greateſt trouble, and no doubt that promiſe that upholdeth a Chriſtian in their doubting and moſt miſbelieving condition, the lively impreſſions of that promiſe will remain a long time; and when firſt it is born in upon their ſpirits, they will ſee no ſmall love ſhining forth in carving out ſuch a promiſe to ſuit with ſuch a Providence as they are (it may be) meeting with for the time.

The fourth advantage in believing the promiſe, is, that thereby we have an excellent help to patience, and divine ſubmiſſion under our ſaddeſt outward afflictions: this is clear from *Pſal.* 37. 13. *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living*: and from *Pſal.* 119. 49, 50. where *David* telling his exerciſe in the 49. *I hope*, ſaith he, *in thy word*, immediatly he ſubjoyned; *This is my comfort in mine afflictions*, as if he had ſaid, if I had not had the promiſes to be my comforters, I had ſit alone and kept ſilence, and ſhould have remained without comfort in the day of my adverſity: and verſe 92. *unleſs thy law had been my delight, I ſhould have periſhed in mine afflictions*; and we conceive in ſhort, the influences which Faith upon the promiſes hath upon the patient bearing of the croſs, may be ſhown unto you in theſe two particulars; Firſt, ſaith It is an excellent Prophet, that alwayes propheſieth unto us good things, would ye enquire at faith at your midnight of affliction, what is its opinion of God and of your own eſtate; Faith would ſweetly reſolve you thus, *wait on God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance.* Faith knoweth not what it is to have a wrong conſtruction of God; and therefore it is the noble interpreter of a Chriſtians croſs. If ſenſe, reaſon,

and misbelief interpret your cross, they will make you cry out unto God, *why art thou become unto me as an enemy*, or *as a liar, & as waters that fail?* but if faith, that noble interpreter do interpret your crosses, it will make you cry out, *I know the thoughts of his heart, that they are thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give me an expected end.* Faith letteth a Christian see a blessed outgate and issue of all the sad dispensations that he meeteth with. Faith, that is its divinity; I sow in tears, but I reap in joy, *weeping it may be at the evening*, saith Faith, *but joy shall come in the morning.* Secondly, it affordeth unto a Christian such soul-refreshing consolation in the midst of their afflictions, that in a manner they forget their sorrows, *as waters that pass away*: this *David* doth divinely assert, in *Psal.* 119. 50. *This is my comfort in affliction*: The faith of the Promises are indeed that tree, which being cast into our waters of *Marah, they will make them immediatly become sweet.*

The fifth advantage is, that the faith of the promises doth help a Christian to a greater distance with the world, and to live as a pilgrim, as is clear from *Heb.* 12, 13. where these two are sweetly linked together, there is the imbracing of the promises by Faith, and confessing, *that they were strangers and pilgrims here on earth.* And we shall show the influence that faith hath upon this, in these three. 1. It maketh a Christian see the end of all perfection here, and that there is nothing within the Glob of the world, that *is not vanity and vexation of spirit.* Faith is that prospect through which a Christian hath most clear discoveries of the vanity of all things, and this doth exceedingly help him to live as a pilgrim. 2. It letteth a Christian see the endless perfections of heaven, and bringeth it within sight of the immense and everlasting hope, and this maketh him to live as a pilgrim, and to declare plainly that he *seeketh a countrey.* And, 3. It doth exceedingly help him forward in that blessed work, of weaning off affections from all things that are here; would ye know where a believers heart is? it is in heaven; Would ye know where his thoughts

are?

are? they are in heaven; Would ye know where his converſation is? it is in heaven; Would ye know where his hope is? it is in heaven; his treaſure is in heaven, and therefore his heart and converſation is there, *And Chriſt in him is the hope of glory*; and indeed, more faith of the promiſes would conſtrain us all to ſubſcribe that *Confeſſion of Faith*, that is in *Heb.* 11. 13.

The ſixth advantage that attendeth the believing of the promiſes, is, that it is the mother of much ſpiritual joy and divine conſolation, and maketh a Chriſtian to be much in the exerciſe of praiſe, this is clear from *Pſal.* 71. 14. *But I will hope continually*, and then immediatly is ſubjoyned, *And will yet praiſe him more and more*, as likewiſe from *Rom.* 15. 13. and from 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. If a man would have his way to heaven made pleaſant, and while they are ſitting by the rivers of *Babel*, would be admitted to *ſing one of the ſongs of Zion*; then ought they to believe the promiſes, and *choiſe them as their heritage for ever*: and then he may ſing in hope, and praiſe in expectation, though he have but little in hand for the preſent: indeed when he looketh to his poſſeſſion, there will not be ſo much matter of rejoycing, but when he looketh upon his hopes and his expectations, he may be conſtrained to cry forth, *Awake up, O my Glory, I my ſelf will awake early.*

The ſeventh advantage is, That the faith of the promiſes, is a notable mean to attain unto ſpiritual life: this is clear from 38 16. *By all theſe things*, ſaith *Ezekiah*, *do men live* (ſpeaking of the promiſes) *and in all theſe things is the life of my ſpirit.* As likewiſe from *Pſal.* 119 50. *Thy words* (ſaith *David*, *hath quickened me.* O what ſpiritual and divine life doth attend that Chriſtian that is much in the exerciſe of faith upon the promiſes: and what is the great occaſion that our hearts are ſometimes dying within us like a ſtone, and we are like unto thoſe that are free among the dead? Is it not becauſe we do not make uſe of the promiſes?

Eighthly, There is that advantage, that faith of the promises it maketh a Christian have an esteem of the thing that is promised. What is the reason that we write this above the head of the great things of the everlasting Covenant, this is a Zoar, a little one? Is it not because we do not believe? great things sometimes to us have no beauty, and there is no comliness that appeareth in them why they should be desired; but if we had so much faith as *a grain of mustard seed*, we would cry forth, How excellent are these things that are purchased to the Saints, and how eternally are they made up, that have a right but of one line of the everlasting Covenant, *that is well ordered in all things, and sure?*

And ninthly, The faith of the promises is the door at which the accomplishment of the promises doth enter in: according to that word, *Luke* 1. 45. *Blessed are they that believe, for there shall be a performance of these things that are spoken of the Lord unto them.* If we were more in waiting for the accomplishment of the promises, *The vision should speak, and should not tarry*; And no doubt a mercy coming to us as the fruit and performance of a promise, will make it an exceeding refreshful thing; When a Christian getteth leave to sing that song which is in *Isa.* 25. 9. *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will come and save us*, and when a mercy is the fruit and accomplishment of the promise, there is a beautiful lustre and dye upon that mercy, which no art could set on, but only the finger of the love of God. The smallest mercy then becometh a matchless mystery of Love, and the most matchless mysteries of Love without the exercise of Faith, they become as things that are contemptible in our eyes, and we do not value nor praise them. Faith maketh our thoughts to ascend, and misbelief maketh our thoughts to descend, in relation to the mercies of Heaven.

Lastly, Besides all these advantages, we have these two mentioned in the Text, 1. That by them we are made partakers of the divine nature, & are brought up

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unto that bleſſed conformity with God, which we had loſt in the fall. 2. That by them we eſcape the corruption in the world through luſt. I intend not particularly to open up the nature of theſe things at this time, becauſe I am only to ſpeak to the exerciſe of faith in the promiſes. But O what excellent mercies are theſe, to get on the beauty of the Image of God, and to get off theſe ugly defilements which were the image of Satan upon our ſouls. O how ſhould this commend the promiſes unto us, that by faith in them we do all *behold with open face, as in a glaſs, the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, as it were by the Spirit of the Lord.*

Now that which ſecondly we ſhall ſpeak to, ſhall be the advantages that reſults to a Chriſtian from a ſpiritual obſervation of the Lords accompliſhing his promiſes; for here ye ſee in the Text, the Apoſtle maketh an obſervation of theſe excellent things that are the fruit of theſe precious promiſes, when they are accompliſhed. And the firſt advantage is, That it ſtampeth the ſoul of a believer with moſt divine impreſſions of love, this is clear, *Iſa.* 38. 15. where *Hezekiah* cryeth out, *what ſhall I ſay, he hath ſpoken it himſelf; and hath done it*, being as it were, aſtoniſhed and overcome with the apprehenſions of the condeſcendency of God, he is put to a nonplus, and to, *what ſhall I ſay*, *Pſal.* 41. 8, 9. *As we have heard*, (ſaith *David*) *ſo have we ſeen in the City of the Lord of hoſts*, that is according to his promiſe, we have had ſuitable performance; and he ſubjoyneth, *verſe* 9. that which was both their exerciſe and their advantage, *We have thought of thy loving kindneſs, O God in the midſt of the temple*, as it were, the obſervation of the performance of the promiſe, made their thoughts wholly to be taken up with the love of God: and no doubt, there is more love in performing one promiſe, then eternity were ſufficient to make a commentary upon. It is one wonder of condeſcendency, that God ſhould oblige and bind himſelf to us by promiſes: and another depth of wonderful love that he ſhould perform theſe bonds, and anſwer his words with performance. The

The ſecond advantage is, that the obſerving of accompliſhment of promiſes doth bring into the ſoul new diſcoveries of God; this is clear, *Exod.* 6. 5. where God thus ſpeaketh to *Moſes*, *I was known* (ſaith he) *unto Abraham, and unto Iſaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of the Almighty, but by the name of Jehovah was I not known to them*, that is, by the name of giving an accompliſhment unto my promiſes, that Name was not diſcovered unto them, but ſhould be made known unto their poſterity, in the day when his promiſes ſhall paſs into performances, and hence it is alſo, that when the Lord is ſpeaking of the accompliſhment of great promiſes, he doth ſo often in the Scripture ſubjoyn that word, *Ye ſhall know that I am Jehovah, or the Lord*, Iſal. 49. 23, 52. and 60. 16. and indeed we daily find it ſo, for, is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe, a new diſcovery of the *wiſdom of God*, that ſhineth in the ſuitable timing of the accompliſhment of a promiſe? is not every accompliſhment of a promiſe a new diſcovery of the *faithfulneſs of God*, that he will not alter that which hath gone out of his mouth: and is not every performance of the promiſe a new diſcovery of the *love of God*, that he deſireth to magnifie his mercies above all his works, and a new diſcovery of the *power and omnipotency of God*, that can bring forth the performance of his promiſe, notwithſtanding of all the things that are in the way, *yea, maketh things that are not to be, and bringeth to nought things that are.*

The third advantage is, That it helpeth a Chriſtian to have high apprehenſions, and majeſtick uptakings of God; This is clear, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. compared with *verſ.* 17. where *Paul* cloſing with that promiſe, *That Chriſt came in the world to ſave ſinners*, and beholding the accompliſhment of it, in himſelf, his heart (as it were) is elevated within him, and he cryeth forth, *Now unto the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever*, Amen. There is an Emphaſis in that word, *Now*; as if *Paul* had ſaid, I could never praiſe and extoll

toll him till now, and I am ſo much bound to Chriſt, that I will not delay this exerciſe one moment, now I will bleſs him, and it is clear from *Micah* 7. 18. where the accompliſhment of the promiſes that are there, made the Church cry out, *Who is like unto thee?* he became matchleſs unto them, through the performance of the promiſes. And ſo we conceive that theſe who are much in ſpiritual obſervation of the performance of the promiſes, they will ſee precious draughts of the Majeſty of God engraven upon them; ſo that they will be conſtrained to cry out, that he above *is mighty, that his Name is Jehovah, and in him is everlaſting ſtrength*, upon which we ought to rely in our greateſt ſtraits.

The fourth advantage is, The obſervation of the accompliſhment of the promiſes will help a Chriſtian when he is redacted unto new ſtraits, to be much in the exerciſe of Faith upon God; his former experience will produce hope in his ſoul; for there is not one diſcovery of the faithfulneſs of God, but hath a voice, and cryeth out, *O believe him* who is able to give a clear beeing unto his word: This is clear from *Pſal.* 56. at the cloſe, *Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death*, ſaith *David*, and then he ſubjoyneth, *Wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling?* that is, I am certainly perſwaded, thou wilt likewiſe perform that word unto me, and from *Pſal.* 37. 2, 3. he giveth that title unto God, *verſ.* 2. that he *performeth all things for him*, and then he doth ſubjoyn, *He ſhall ſend from heaven and ſave me*; and (by the way) the ſoul that can give God that title and ſtile, *that he performeth all things for them*, that ſoul muſt of neceſſity be in a choiſe and excellent ſtate; And the point is likewiſe clear, from 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. where *Paul* ſaith, *God hath delivered me, and he doth deliver me*, and from hence he draweth that concluſion of Faith, *And he will yet deliver me*; We confeſs ſometimes our former experience of the faithfulneſs of God, they do not ſupport the faith when we are redacted unto new difficulties, which is either occaſioned through the greatneſs of the ſtraits that we are

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now put to, (in our apprehensions) above that which we were put to before; so that though God did deliver us when we were *running with foot-men*, yet we have no faith to believe that he shall deliver us when we are about to *contend with horses*; or else it is, through the unfaithfulness of our walk, in not answering the precious dispensations of Christ, in accomplishment of his promises, for this maketh us that we cannot with boldness make use of his Word when we are brought unto a new strait, a guilty conscience is the mother of misbelief.

The fifth advantage is, The accomplishment of the promises doth occasion much spiritual joy, and rejoycing unto his own. We told you, the giving of the promises occasioneth joy, and when the promises travelleth in birth, and bringeth forth, that occasioneth much more spiritual joy; this is clear from *Psal.* 28: 7. *The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusted in him, and I was helped.* And he draweth this excellent conclusion from it, *Therefore my heart greatly rejoyceth, and with my soul will I praise him.* And we conceive, that sometimes, God trusteth the accomplishment of the promises with some precious manifestation of himself to the soul, which maketh them to *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; but however, this is the matter of a spiritual song, *That mercy and truth have met together, and righteousness and peace are kissing one another*: Is it not a pleasant matter of a song to behold *love* making promises, and to behold *faithfulness* accomplishing them. And the last is, that the observation of the accomplishment of promises, doth strengthen a Christians Faith in his interest in God, so that now many disputings are silenced, and many questions now are out of the way, this is clear, *Ps.* 31. 21, 22. *David* confessing his quarrelling before, but when once the Lord *had shewed his marvellous loving kindness in a strong city*, then all his quarrel was against himself, because he had *quarrelled*, and did say *in his haste, I am cut off from before thine eyes.*

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And now we ſhall only ſpeak a little unto ſome duties that we would preſs upon you, from that which we have ſpoken; And the firſt duty is, that Chriſtians would be much in waiting for the accompliſhment of the promiſes; and ſtanding upon their watch tower until the *viſion ſhall ſpeak*: and we ſhall only give you theſe to enforce it, It is commanded that you ſhould ſo do, this is clear from *Pſal.* 27. at the cloſe: where *David* preſſeth that duty very much, *wait on the Lord*, ſaith he, and if that be not enough, he will repeat that command in that ſame verſe, *wait I ſay on the Lord*: and no doubt the doubling of it ſpeaketh not only the advantage that is in it, but our difficulty to obey it, and the great neceſſity that we have to go about it: and that ſame word is repeated by *David*, Pſal. 31. 24. *Be of good courage*, which is that ſame, to wait upon the Lord. 2. Theſe that wait patiently for the accompliſhment of the promiſes, God will ſtrengthen them to wait: this is clear from *Pſal.* 27. at the cloſe, *wait on the Lord*; and when we are *Hagar*-like caſting away the child of hope, he will open our eyes, and give us refreſhment, by whih we may be ſupported under our diſquietment, *and he ſhall ſtrengthen thine heart*; And there is this, 3. There ſhall be a ſpeedy accompliſhment of the promiſes; It is not long before all the mercies that ever the Lord hath promiſed, and thou haſt believed, ſhall be told down to you, as it were, in one ſum, *principal* and *intereſt*; as is clear from *Hab.* 2. 3. where he poſitively aſſerteth, *That the viſion will come, and will not tarry.* There is indeed a pleaſant ſeeming contradiction in that verſe, he had ſaid before, *that the viſion would tarry*, and yet here he ſaith, *that the viſion will not tarry, but will ſurely come*, in which ye may ſee the divinity both of *ſenſe* and *faith*, and that noble contradiction that is between their aſſertions, *ſenſe* aſſerteth, that the promiſe doth tarry too long, and *Faith* crying out, it will ſurely come, it will not tarry, which is ſet down, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. *The Lord is not ſlack concerning his promiſe.* 4. Promiſes that come unto us through

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the moſt ſtrong and lively exerciſe of Faith, and that are expected and longed for by us before they come, they are moſt reliſhing and ſweet, and thoſe mercies come unto us with a binding tye of love: this is ſomewhat pointed at, in *Iſa.* 25. 9. where the Church cryeth forth, *Lo this is our God, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoyce in his ſalvation*, their waiting and expecting of the promiſe to be accompliſhed in its time, is there the fountain of their ſong, and of their ſpiritual joy: I think ſometimes a Chriſtian is like that misbelieving lord, 2 *King* 7. 2. that though they meet with the accompliſhment of a promiſe, yet they do not taſte of the ſweetneſs that is in it, becauſe they did not believe the word of the Lord.

The ſecond duty that we would preſs from what we have ſpoken, is that Chriſtians would cloſe with the promiſes for their everlaſting inheritance, ſince the promiſes of the Covenant *are exceeding great*, and *exceeding precious*, and the advantage that lyeth in them is unſpeakable. O! ſhould not theſe things proclaim aloud unto us, *cloſe with the promiſes as your portion for ever?* I think, one that hath a right to the promiſes, and hath entered himſelf Heir unto the vaſt inheritance, he may ſometimes rejoyce in that threefold myſtery of the Goſpel, that to a natural man can hardly appear other than a contradiction. 1. He may ſay ſometimes, *I have nothing*, and yet *I poſſeſs all things*; for when he looketh unto his beeing in the World, he is a poor *Lazarus*, having no place whereon to lay his head; but when he caſteth his eye upon his ſpiritual inheritance, then he beholdeth his treaſures, and is conſtrained to cry out, I *poſſeſſe all things*. 2. Sometimes he may cry forth, I *am rich*, and yet I am *exceeding poor*: he may be rich in hopes, and yet poor in his poſſeſſions. There is much of a Chriſtians treaſure that lieth in hope; hope is that thing that will make the Chriſtian ſweetly quite all other in compariſon of that: that is the motto of the Chriſtian, *ſpero meliora*; which he holdeth up in his flag, even in the greateſt ſtorm, and at length he find-

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eth it true, that hope *maketh not aſhamed.* 3. Sometime the Chriſtian will cry forth; *I am always ſorrowing*, and yet *always rejoicing*: when he caſteth his eye upon himſelf, he will ſit down and water his couch with tears; but when with the other eye he reflecteth upon Jeſus Chriſt, *he will rejoyce with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*; a Chriſtian can both weep and rejoyce at one time, and again he can *rejoyce and weep*: No doubt, the reflecting upon the immenſe hope, and that everlaſting Crown will make a Chriſtian rejoyce under all his diſquietments and anxieties in the world, he can look to the back of time, and behold a glorious inheritance. Chriſtian hath an eye of an Eagle that can behold and diſcern things afar off.

The third duty that we would preſs upon you, is, to long for the day when all the promiſes of the covenant of Grace ſhall receive their compleat accompliſhment, and when ye ſhall be entered into the everlaſting fruition of all the things wherein your bleſſedneſs lyeth. There is a threefold *come* that Chriſt ſpeaketh to the ſoul that is united unto him, all which they ſweetly obey. There is that firſt *come* which is in *Mat.* 11.28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy loaden*: And there is that ſecond *come*, Iſai. 26. *Come, my people, enter into thy chambers*, which is to entertain that excellent correſpondency with him in troubleſome times: And there is that third matchleſs *come*, when Chriſt ſhall ſay to his own in the day of their ſtanding before the Tribunal, *Come, O bleſſed of my Father*: Shall we ſay it, that if we had *faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed*, we would cry forth, *Why is his chariot ſo long in coming*; and did we reliſh or made a high account of the matchleſs promiſes of the boundleſs Covenant, we would cry forth, *O that our time would flee away as the ſhips of deſire.* I ſhall ſay no more but this, Chriſt *is gone up with a ſhout* unto heaven, and ſhall come again with the *ſound of a trumpet*, *ſing praiſes to God, ſing praiſes, ſing praiſes unto our God, ſing praiſes.*

The laſt thing that we would preſs upon you, is, That ye would mark the time of the accompliſhment

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of the promiſes; And as to this, I ſhall ſay but theſe 1. That ordinarily the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, is the time when ſenſe, reaſon, and probability doth moſt contradict them: this is clear, *Ezek.* 37. in the fulfilling of the promiſes that were paſt to *Judah* in their captivity, was it not when they were as a *valley of dead bones*, and their hopes were in a manner cut off for their part, from the 11. verſe of that Chapter, compared with the 12. And, 2. That the time of the accompliſhment of the promiſes, ordinarily, is from *Dan.* 9. 2, 3. and from *Jer.* 29. 12. compared a praying time: this is alſo clear with the 10. and the 12. Thus ſaith the Lord, the time when he will viſit them, and perform his good word to them, in cauſing them to return, it ſhall be a time when they ſhall *call upon me, and ſhall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto them.* And, 3. The time of the accompliſhment of his promiſes, it is a time when our thoughts of the promiſes are high and large, when once we begin to value our mercies, this is a ſign that our mercy is near, and it bringeth forth: however it is our duty to wait on him who can give a beeing unto his Word, and ſweetly perform his promiſes: we ought not to limit infinite Wiſdom, nor to ſay unto him that is infinite in ſtrength, *How can ſuch a thing be?* but anſwer all objections of miſbelief with this, God hath ſpoken it, and he will alſo do it, and draw all objections of miſbelief in that glorious and myſterious Name of His, *I am that I am.* To Him be praiſe.

SE RMON

SERMON VI.

Acts 26. 18. *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgivenneſs of ſins, and inheritance among them which are ſanctified, by faith that is in me.*

WHen firſt we did begin our diſcourſe upon the precious and excellent grace of Faith; We told you that we intended to ſpeak of it under a two-fold notion and conſideration. Firſt, as it layeth hold upon Chriſt for Juſtification; and of this we have ſpoken to you at ſome length, as ye have heard. Secondly, As it cloſeth with Chriſt for Sanctification; and of this we are to ſpeak of it, which are a part of that excellent Oration and Diſcourſe that *Paul* had before *Agrippa* in his own defence; In which Oration and Diſcourſe of his, ye may behold theſe four things eminently ſhining, 1. That godlineſs and good manners are not inconſiſtent, nor contrary one to another. Therefore ye will ſee in the ſecond and third verſes of this Chapter, *Paul* acting the part of a Courtly Orator: and believe it, there is more good manners to be learned by being ſeven days in the School of Chriſt, then by being ſeven years in all the Courts of *France*. This, ſecondly, that innocent Policy he made uſe of in the deliverance of this Oration; which likewiſe doth appear in the ſecond and third verſes of this Chapter; where he endeavours to inſinuate and ingratiate himſelf in the favours of the perſon before whom he had ſtood; I confeſs, piety is the beſt policy that is taken up in entertaining piety, howbeit, true policy may move in one orb and ſphere with piety, and the one is not contrary to the other in ſome caſe. 3. This ſhineth in that diſcourſe, even the ſpiritual boldneſs *Paul* had in giving an excellent confeſſion of his faith, and the declaring him to be God, even Jeſus Chriſt in whom he did believe; *Chriſt witneſſed a glo-*

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rious confession before Pontius Pilat for him, and he would witness a glorious *confession* from *Agrippa* for Christ, that since Christ had not denied him in that notable day, he would not now deny precious Christ in this day: and this is from the beginning and all alongs. Lastly, This shineth in the words that *Paul* doth set forth, the matchless freedom and unspeakable riches of Christ; not only toward himself in that he did cast the lot of everlasting love toward him; but likewise towards the Gentiles, to whom he was sent as a Preacher, and that he did gloriously condescend to visit the dark places of the earth, and to have the *morning* and *the day spring from on high* arising on the habitations of cruelty. And in this verse which we have read, you may behold these five glorious ends of the preaching of this everlasting Gospel, for attaining of which, Ministers are made instruments under God. The first is, to open *the eyes of the blind*, which in short is, even this. to give those that are ignorant of God, the spiritual knowledge of the deep mysteries of the Father, and of the Son. So that from this, ye may see that the Gospel hath a kind of omnipotency in producing effects of the power of nature. The second we may see in these words, to *remove them from darkness to light*; which importeth these two; 1. The removing of persons from an estate of misery, unto an estate of excellent joy. 2. The removing of persons from a state of inlquity, unto an estate of holiness: *darkness* in Scripture pointeth our sin, and *light* in Scripture pointeth out holiness. 3. The bringing us *from under the power of Satan unto God*, the making a blessed exchange of captivity and bondage, that these who were under the captivity of Satan, may be under the captivity of love, that those who were under the bondage of sin, may be under the sweet obedience of Christ, *whose yoke is easie, and whose burden is light*, Matth. 11. 30. 4. That persons may receive the *remission of sin and the forgiveness of their iniquity.* This is the great voice of the Gospel, come to a crucified Christ, come to a pardoning Christ, come

to a glorified Christ, Christ hath the pardon of iniquity in his one hand, and riches of himself in the other, and these are the great motives by which he studieth to perswade us to come. And the last is in the close of the verse, that persons may receive forgiveness of sins, and *inheritance among them which are sanctified by Faith that is in me*; that is, that they may have a share of that glorious mansion, of that excellent Kingdom that Christ hath purchased, and hath gone before to prepare. And withall, in this verse as the words are set down, ye may see the excellent and orderly method that the Gospel keepth in conquering souls, and you may see these excellent allurements, these perswasive arguments that Christ holdeth forth to conquer you, as it were, Christ cometh not to us cloathed with the robes of Majesty, but cloathed with the robes of Love and Advantage, knowing that in this posture he shall most gain upon our hearts.

Now in speaking unto that last end of the preaching of the Gospel, we shall only according to our present purpose, take notice of this one thing from it (not intending to prosecute it as it is an end of the Gospel (but as it is a property of Faith: and it is that, *Faith in Jesus Christ hath a noble excellent influence upon the growth of Sanctification, and the attaining of holiness, They are sanctified*, saith he, *through faith in me*. We shall not stand long to clear this unto you, it is evident from *Act.* 15 9. where the Apostle telleth us of *purifying our hearts by faith*; and likewise, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5. where a pure heart and faith unfeigned; they are joyned and linked together. As likewise, 1 *John* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, he purifieth himself.* All the Graces of the Gospel they are linked together by a golden and unseparable chain, so that he that obtaineth one, he shall obtain all; yea more, all the graces of the Gospel, they have a mutual influence upon one anothers growth, so that we may compare them unto *Hippocrates* twins, of whom it was reported, that they did laugh and weep together, and they did grow together; even so when one grace doth rejoyce, the rest doth

doth rejoyce with it, and when one grace doth mourn, the rest doth also mourn with it, and when one grace doth grow, the rest of the graces of the Spirit they do likewise grow apace.

There are only three particulars that we shall insist a little upon: First, We shall shew you how faith hath influence upon the attaining of Sanctification, and this we make clear unto you in these respects.

1. In that it discovereth to the soul that matchless excellency, that transcendent beauty, and that surpassing comliness that is in Christ, which sight doth exceedingly perswade the soul to draw that conclusion, *What have I to do any more with idols?* A glorious sight of Christ, and acquaintance with him, maketh us lose our acquaintance with our idols; and when once we are united unto Christ by faith, we break that union we had with them. And indeed the want of the knowledge of the excellent comliness that is in Christ, and of love to him, is the great occasion that the poorest deities and idols in the world taketh up your hearts: did ye but once see him who is that *glorious Sun of righteousness*, ye would be forced to put in your *Amen* unto that excellent Confession of Faith, *Eccl.* 1. 2. *Vanity of vanities, and all is but vanity and vexation of spirit.*

2. In that it is the grace that discovers unto a Christian the spotless holiness of Christ, faith doth not only discover the beauty of Christ, but likewise his holiness, and this doth make the soul fall in love with that excellent thing, *Sanctification.* It is recorded amongst the first steps to sin and misery, that we desire to be as God, knowing good and evil: but certainly it is amongst the first steps to life and happiness, when the soul desireth to be holy as he is holy: And I suppose, this is the great ground that ye are not much endeavouring a blessed conformity to God, and to be partakers of the blessed Image of Christ, ye know not the beauty of holiness.

3. Faith layeth hold upon Jesus Christ, and draweth strength and vertue from him for the conquering

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of luſts, and in raiſing us up into a bleſſed conformity unto himſelf; when the Chriſtian is weak, Faith is that noble correſpondent between that emptineſs that is in us, and the fulneſs that is in Chriſt; Faith is that noble correſpondent between that weakneſs that is in us, and that everlaſting ſtrength that is in him: Therefore there are two noble and excellent counſels of Faith: Firſt, It counſels us not to lean to our own ſtrength; And ſecondly, to have our recourſe unto him whoſe Name is *Jehovah*, that *everlaſting ſtrength*; And no doubt, if we were more taken up in imploying Chriſt by faith, that prophecy ſhould be accompliſhed, *I will make the feeble ones as David, and David as the Angels of God*; and when a Chriſtian is moſt diffident in himſelf, then God ſhould prove himſelf to be All-mighty, and all-ſufficient.

And, 4. Faiths influence may be cleared in this, that it layeth hold upon the promiſes, and doth believe them: and believing of the promiſes bringeth forth that noble birth, *conformity to God*; according to that Word upon which we were ſpeaking, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. by believing the promiſes, (that is the advantage of it) *We are by them made partakers of the divine nature.*

5. Faith alſo believeth the threatnings that are paſt in Scripture againſt ſin, and the believing them hath an undoubted and ſtrong influence upon the attaining and growth of Sanctification; Faith ſtrengtheneth the Chriſtian, againſt the committing of iniquity, with theſe two words; that word, *Rom.* 6. 20. *O ſoul* (ſaith Faith) commit not iniquity, for *the wages of ſin is death*; and that word, *Revel.* 21. laſt, *There ſhall in no ways enter into that City any thing that is unclean, or that committeth iniquity.* And be perſwaded of it, that the faith of the threatnings and of the promiſes that are in Scripture, would be as a threefold cord, not eaſily broken, to reſtrain you from the acting of iniquity; And ſhall I tell you briefly the ground why theſe curſed hearts of ours do commit iniquity with ſo little fear, and with ſo much delight, it is even this, becauſe we believe not the

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threatnings of God, which ſhall be accompliſhed in their own ſeaſon; for is it poſſible that if ye believed that word, *Rev.* 21. laſt, *That nothing ſhall enter into the new Jeruſalem that defileth or worketh abomination, or that maketh a lie*; that ye durſt for a world adventure upon the committing of iniquity, as ye do. And I ſhall only ſay to ſuch that do undervalue the threatnings of God, the day is coming, when they ſhall be conſtrained to cry out, *He hath ſpoken it, and he hath done it, and faithful is he.* There is not one jot nor title in the Word of the Lord that ſhall fall to the ground: And believe it, God will be faithful in the accompliſhment of his threatnings, as he is faithful in the accompliſhment of his promiſes.

6. Faith diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian the noble excellencies and thoſe ſpiritual dignities that are in that everlaſting eſtate that is provided for the Saints in light; Faith (as it were) carrieth up the ſoul to the top of *Piſgah*, of which, it is admitted to behold the *promiſed land*, and truely the ſeeing of theſe noble things that are provided for the Saints cannot but make them ſtudy holineſs, ſince they know that there is an impoſſibility for one to attain to that eſtate without holineſs, becauſe he had ſaid it, *without holineſs no man ſhall ſee God.* O then, if once ye ſaw Heaven, ye would be conſtrained to walk in that path of Sanctification, ſince it is the glorious way by which ye muſt walk in through the gates of that bleſſed City. But ye know not the excellency that is there, it is a fancy and notion unto you: and the ground that ye do not ſtudy to conform your ſelves unto that bleſſed image of God. And I would only ask you this one queſtion, Is it poſſible that ſuch a deluſion as this can overtake you, as to think, that you who never ſtudied holineſs on earth, ſhall yet enter into Heavens gates? I know there are ſome that ſay in their hearts, *I ſhall have peace though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart*: and many more that ſuppoſe that they might fight and overcome, that they may quite the eſtate of nature, and be compleat

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In the eſtate of grace, all in one day: But why will ye deceive your ſelves, *Can a nation be born in one day?* Or is there but one ſtep between hell and heaven? O remember, though nothing be impoſſible with God, yet there was but one thief ſaved upon the croſs. 7. Faith hath influence upon the attaining of holineſs in this reſpect, that it believeth the exceeding great advantages that are promiſed unto the perſon that ſtudieth holineſs. Faith believeth that word, Mat. 5. 8. *Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit, for they ſhall ſee God.* Faith it layeth hold upon the truth of the excellent ſayings, and maketh the Chriſtian endeavour to attain unto a likeneſs and conformity with him, ſo that he may be admitted to behold his face for all eternity, and to be made like unto him.

8. Faith diſcovereth unto a Chriſtian the ſinfulneſs of ſin, this is never done till once they be in the lively exerciſe of the grace of Faith. And I will give you theſe three grounds why Faith compleatly diſcovereth the ſinfulneſs of ſin. 1. Faith letteth us ſee the perſon againſt whom we commit this ſin, and that doth exceedingly aggredge ſin; for when the Chriſtian is admitted to behold God, and to ſee that matchleſs excellency that is in him, then (ſaith he) what a beaſt was I to offend ſuch a glorious Majeſty as he? what a fool was I to kick againſt the pricks, or to enter in the liſts with ſuch an infinite God? 2. Faith letteth a Chriſtian ſee theſe excellent obligations of love that Chriſt hath impoſed upon us; Faith letteth us ſee the ancient and everlaſting love of Chriſt; Faith is that grace that letteth us ſee his ſufferings, Faith letteth us ſee all that he hath done for us, and this maketh the Chriſtian to cry out, *Do I thus requite the Lord, O fooliſh one and unwiſe?* And no doubt, if a Chriſtian were more taken up in the ſtudy of this duty, he would be leſs in contracting debt, and were you but ſeriouſly taken up in the ſtudy of theſe two great Regiſters; 1. The Regiſter in which all the infinite acts of love are recorded. And, 2. That Regiſter in which all your acts of offending precious Chriſt

are written, ye would be astonished and ashamed to see so much forgiven you, and durst not sin any more; there ye would see infinite mercy *desiring to rejoyce over judgment*; and there ye would see the spotless richesof that transcendent grace that is in Christ. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see the disadvantages of sin, and what woful effects doth follow upon it, and this doth exceedingly hold forth the sinfulness of sin.

The second thing that we shall speak to concerning Faiths influence in the attaining Sanctification, shall be to enquire a little into these things that hinder even believers from attaining this blessed effect of their faith; for some Christians there are, that in some respects are taken up in the exercise of faith; making use of Christ for Sanctification, and yet their making use of Christ by Faith, doth not weaken the strength of their idols (at least) to their apprehensions, neither doth raise them up to a conformity with God; so that they are constrained sometimes to cry out, *I shall once fall by the hand of one of mine iniquities*; and when they fight and do not overcome, they are at last constrained to say, *There is no hope.*

The first ground of such a dispensation is, That a Christian is not constant in his actings of faith, he will be strong in faith to day, and when the morrow cometh, he will faint in that exercise, and this doth exceedingly interrupt the noble victory of faith; for when faith hath gotten its advantages, they lose them through security and negligence, that is a command that should be continually obeyed, *Trust in the Lord at all times*; and no doubt, if a Christian were more taken up in the constant acting of faith, he should sometimes sing that song, *I trusted in God, and I was helped.*

Secondly, The most part of Christians, they are not strong and vigorous in actings of their faith, their faith is exceedingly weak, and so they cannot bring forth these noble fruits and effects of faith. If we were trusting in God with all our hearts, then that promise, *Psal.* 37. 5. should be accomplished unto us, *Trust in the Lord,*

Lord, and he ſhall bring it to paſs. Thirdly, There is a ſtrong heart-conjunction, and ſoul-union between us and our idols: we are joyned to our idols, and therefore we cannot be eaſily divorced; yea, when we are in the heat of the war againſt them, there is a procuratour within, that cryeth, *O ſpare this little one*, or this *profitable* or *pleaſant* one, and this is ordinarily our practice, to ſpare the choiſeſt of our luſts, ſo that our *Agags* may cry forth, *The bitterneſs of death is paſt.* But I confeſs, if that union were once diſſolved, we ſhould then be heard with greateſt earneſtneſs to cry forth, *O bleſſed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to fight.* Fourthly, ſometimes a Chriſtian layeth too much weight upon the actings of Faith, and doth not imploy Faith, but as an inſtrument to which Chriſt muſt beſtow ſtrength to conquer. Sometimes we think that faith hath the vertue of overcoming in its own hand, but remember, faith is but an empty thing without Chriſt, as you may ſee, *Acts* 15. 9. where the *puriſying their hearts by faith*, is aſcribed to the Holy Ghoſt, ſo that the activity of faith is from him, and not in it ſelf. Fifthly, a Chriſtian doth not hate ſin with a perfect hatred, even in the time of his warfare with his luſts, and with theſe ſtrong Idols that are within him, but here is a ſecret heart inclination to that very idol which he doth oppoſe: So that oftentimes there is that twofold contradiction in a Chriſtian; Sometimes his light will cry, mortifie ſuch an idol,& yet his heart will cry, O ſpare ſuch an idol, yea more, ſometimes his heart will cry, mortifie ſuch an idol,& yet his heart will cry,O ſpare ſuch an idol. That is to ſay, there will be one part of our affection crying one thing, and another part of it will cry another thing. O! but there is a remarkable command for the perfect hatred of ſin, *Rom.* 11. *Abhor that which is evil*; the word is in the original,hate evil as ye would do hell, that is, have perfect hatred to ſin. O to hate iniquity as much as hell: and joyn that word, *Eph.* 5. 11. *Reprove the unfruitful works of darkneſs*, or as the word may be rendered *make out by unanſwerable arguments*, to

your temptations, that you cannot imbrace the unfruitful works of darkneſs, convince your temptations that ye cannot do it; As we ſuppoſe, it was a noble arguing of *Joſeph* when he was tempted, *How ſhall I do this?* he puts the temptation (as it were) to it: O temptation! give me one ground why I ſhould commit ſuch an iniquity. And certainly, if we were thus reaſoning with our temptations, they ſhould flee before us; But the truth is, we imbrace the deſire of our temptation upon implicite faith. It is a ſad regrate, and yet I may utter it, O if men would but deal with God, as they do by Satan, we never diſpute the promiſe of Satan, and never examine theſe allurements he ſetteth forth, and yet we conſtantly diſpute with God upon every thing. Sixthly, A Chriſtian promoveth not in the growth of Sanctification, though in ſome meaſure exerciſing faith, becauſe he hath not ſuch a heart to holineſs. If we did diſcover more that excellent beauty, that is, in being cloathed with that glorious robe of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and in having the ſweet draughts of the Image of Chriſt engraven upon our hearts, we would have more victory over our luſts. There is a command for *a perfect love* to that which is good, and holineſs in that ſame place, *Rom.* 12.9. and *cleave* (ſaith he) *to that which is good*: or, as the word may be rendered, *be married and glewed* to that which is good, let there be an unſeparable and indiſſolvable knot of union between you and that which is good. And certainly, if once we believed that report which is given of holineſs, we would endeavour more to be cloathed with it; but that is the great ground why we advance not in holineſs, we know not the advantage nor dignity, to be made *like God*. O will ye think on it: What a thing is it for you who are the duſt of his feet to be made conform to him? Seventhly a Chriſtian is not much in the exerciſe of other duties that ſhould go along with faith, ſuſpect that faith for preſumption, that can act, and be maintained without Prayer, certainly prayer it keepeth in the life of Faith; Prayer, it is that grace that muſt act mutually with

with Faith, in accompliſhing that bleſſed work of Sanctification, and if we prayed more, and believed more, then we ſhould have more to ſpeak concerning the victory over our luſts. When was it, O Chriſtian, and expectant of Heaven, that ye was conſtrained to put up an *Ebenezer*, and cry forth, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped me?* When was it, O Chriſtian, and expectant of Heaven, that ye was put to cry forth, *God hath ariſen, and mine enemies are ſcattered before my face?* I will tell you what is your practice, ye make ſuch a Covenant with your idols as *Nahaſh* did with the men of *Jabeſh Gilead*, 1 *Sam.* 11. 23. your luſts deſire to make you pluck out your right eyes, and there is nothing your luſts will command you, but almoſt ye will obey; but would you ſend out prayers as a Meſſenger to tell the King of ſuch tyranny, ye ſhould know better what it is to be victorious. There is ſuch a Covenant between the graces of the Spirit, eſpecially between Faith and Prayer (if ſo we may allude) as was made between *Joab* and *Abiſhai*, 2 *Sam.* 10. 11. one grace, as it were, ſaith to another, If I be weak, *come over and help me*, and if ye be weak, I *will come and help you.* When one grace is like to fall in battel, then another cometh and helpeth it: when faith is like to die, then prayer and experience cometh in, and ſweetly helpeth faith; when love is beginning to die, and wax cold in the ſight, then faith cometh in and putteth life in love; and when patience is like to fail and be overcome, then faith comes in and ſpeaks that word to patience, *wait on God, for I ſhall yet praiſe him for the health of his countenance.* Oftentimes our patience and our ſenſe, they joyn together, for when ſenſe ſpeaketh good things, patience is in life; but when once ſenſe preacheth hard things, it is like to die, and faith muſt then maintain and uphold it.

The third thing that we ſhall ſpeak as to Faiths influence upon Sanctification, ſhall be to draw theſe four concluſions from the point.

The firſt is, That ye may know from this the riſe

and original of your little ſucceſs over corruption: There are many that are troubled with this queſtion: O, What is the ground that I get not victory over my luſts: and they propoſe that queſtion to Chriſt, that once the Diſciples propoſed to him, *Why was it that I could not caſt out ſuch a devil?* And I can give no other anſwer then Chriſt gave to them, it is becauſe ye have not faith, *For if ye had faith as a grain of muſtard ſeed*, ye might ſay unto your idols, depart from us, and they ſhould obey you, and there ſhould not be a mountain in the way between you and Heaven, but if ye had faith, it ſhould be rolled away, and become a plain. And the great ground why many are groaning under the captivity of their Idols, is, that they are not much in the exerciſe of faith; ſometimes ye enter in the liſts with your luſts in your own ſtrength, then ye are carried captives, and if ye do enter in the liſts having ſome faith, yet ye maintain not the war, if faith get but one ſtroak.

I will tell you ſix things, which if faith overcome, it keepeth the field, and maketh the Chriſtian ſing a ſong of triumph, even before a compleat victory.

Firſt, Faith helpeth a Chriſtian to overcome that idol of impatience and diſcontent, ſome never meet with a diſcouragement, but they cryed out, *This evil is of the Lord, why ſhould I wait any longer?* they are ſoon put to the end of their patience; now faith can overcome ſuch an Idol, & I will tell you three excellent things that faith performeth to the ſoul under impatience, or when it is in hazard of it. 1. Faith telleth the Chriſtian, *there is an end*, and their *expectation ſhall not be cut off*; Faith telleth there is a morning as well as a night, and this keepeth the ſoul from being overcome with diſcouragement, when they are brought to the midnight of trouble: Faith can tell what hour of the night it is, and how near the approaching of the morning, when day ſhall break, and their clouds flee away. 2. Faith helpeth the Chriſtian to ſee there is much in Chriſt to make up any loſs or diſadvantage that they have: If ye loſe your ſon, or your choiſeſt contentment

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in the world, faith will say such a word as *Elkana* said to *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 8. Is not *Christ better to thee then ten sons?* the choisest contentments ye can lose (that is faiths divinity) Christ is worth an hundred of them; and so this maketh the soul to be ashamed of their impatiency, and to give over their fretting at the excellent and wise dispensations of God. 3. Faith letteth a Christian see, that there is not a dispensation that he meeteth with, but it hath these two excellent ends, it hath our advantage as one end, and the glory of the Lord as another end; and there is not a dispensation that a Christian meeteth with, but these are the glorious ends proposed in it. And therefore I would only give you this advice, evermore when ye meet with a dark dispensation, let faith interpret it, for it is only the best interpreter of dark dispensations, for if ye meet with sense, this is its interpretation, he is not chastning me in love, but punishing me with the wound of an enemy, but faith will propheſie good things to you in the darkest night.

The second next great idol that faith will bring low, is this idol of covetousness and desire to the things of the world. I think that word *Eccleſiaſt.* 3. 1. was never so much accomplished as it is in these days, and amongst you, *He hath set the world in your hearts*, that is the idol that dwelleth and lodgeth within you; yea, the world it hath your first thoughts in the morning, and your last thoughts at night, yea more, it hath your thoughts when you are at prayer, and when you are at preaching; yea, it hath such a dominion over you, that it giveth you, as it were, a new Bible, and in all the ten Commands scrapeth out the Name of God, and setteth down the world. And whereas God saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, the world saith, *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me*, &c. But faith will bring this idol low, and soon let you see the vanity and emptiness of it; yea, faith would let you see a more noble object, and withall, discover unto you how short your time is, and how few hours ye have to spend in following after lies; and

I am perſwaded of this, that if ye could win to ſhake hands with cold death every day, and ſay, thou at laſt ſhall be my Prince, and ſhall be the King to whom I ſhall be a Subject; and if ye believed that the day of eternity were approaching, it would be a mean to mortifie theſe purſuits after the world; and I ſhall ſay, he is a bleſſed Chriſtian that can maintain always ſuch thoughts of the world, as he ſhall have when he is ſtanding upon the utmoſt line between Time and Eternity. I ſhall ſay it, and believe it; O worldling, and O thou that haſt the Moon upon thy head, and in thy heart, the day ſhall once come that thou may preach as much of the vanity of the world, as thoſe that undervalued it never ſo much.

The third great idol that faith will bring low, is that idol of *ſelf-love*, and *ſelf-indulgence*, that which is the great mother of all other idols. I think if there were no more to be ſaid againſt that idol of ſelf-love, and ſelf-indulgence, then that which is in 2*Tim.*3.2: were ſufficient, that among all the great idols of the latter times, this is put in the firſt place, *they ſhall be lovers of themſelves*; we cannot take pains for Chriſt, we cannot go about the exerciſe of any duty, becauſe that idol of ſelf-indulgence forbiddeth us. I will tell you its counſel and great advice it giveth you: *O perſon, pity thy ſelf*, that ſame counſel *Peter* gave to his Maſter, it biddeth you pity your ſelf. But if ye could rightly interpret that language, it would be this, *deſtroy your ſelf; for ſelf-indulgence and ſelf-love* is that which will ruine you. O what bleſſed attainments of God; what bleſſed fruition of Jeſus Chriſt, what advancement in mortification, what conformity to God, hath that idol of ſelf-indulgence obſtructed, and not only utterly ruined even in the beſt? I think if once ye could ſet your foot upon that idol, the reſt ſhould fall apace; that is the *General* of all the forces of your luſts, and it is a *Saul*, the head higher then the reſt of all your idols within you.

The fourth idol that faith will ſubdue, is ſelf-righteouſneſs, this is a great thing we maintain, we will never

never renounce our own righteouſneſs, and ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and the great ground of it is, that there is this principle within us all, we love to go to Heaven thorow a Covenant of Works, and we never deſire to be much obliged to any other, we cannot ſubmit our ſelves to the righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

The fifth great idol that faith can ſubdue, is that of *pleaſure*, the world and the attainments of it; *pleaſure* is the great idol that many worſhip, and adore, there are ſome that love the gain of the world, and there are others that love the pleaſures of the world; but Faith hath a noble influence upon the bringing low ſuch an idol; for faith diſcovereth to a ſoul more excellent pleaſures, more ſweet delights nor is to be found under the Sun; faith maketh a Chriſtian loſe his taſte unto all things that are here below; faith is that grace that maketh us grow blind, and not much to behold theſe paſſing vanities, theſe tranſient delights of a preſent evil world.

Our ſecond concluſion is this, That as faith helpeth Sanctification, ſo Sanctification helpeth Faith. I will tell you three great advantages faith hath by the growth and exerciſe of Sanctification; 1. It is a noble evidence of faith, & maketh a Chriſtian to be perſwaded that he is ſettled upon the rock, and that his intereſt in God, is made ſure. Sanctification is that which will help a Chriſtian daily to read his intereſt in God; this is clear from *Jam.* 2. 18. *I will ſhew thee my faith by my works*, where this is clearly holden forth, that a Chriſtian much in the work of Sanctification, he can upon all times give an extract of his faith, and as it were, diſcover it, and ſhew it to the world. 2. Sanctification maketh faith perfect, according to that remarkable word, *Jam.* 2.22. *And by works was faith made perfect.* There is a noble perfection that redoundeth to faith through the exerciſe of the work of Sanctification, for not only is it thereby made manifeſt, and receiveth ſuch a ſhining luſtre and ſplendor, as that ſometimes the eyes of carnal men are even dazled to behold a Believer, but it alſo receiveth ſtrength and power;

Faith is not of the nature of these things that spend themselves in bringing forth; but on the contrary, if faith bring forth a hundred children (I mean works of holiness) in one day it groweth strong; and this is further clear, 2 *Pet.* 1. 8. *For if these things be in you and abound, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful.* And from that other word, *Jam.* 2. where it is said, *That faith without works is dead, being alone*: If faith be alone, it wants its spiritual life and vigor; but if ye were much in the exercise of the work of Sanctification, ye would, no doubt, attain to a noble and lively acting of that grace of Faith. And lastly, if a Christian be much in the work of Sanctification, there will be a comfortable exercise of faith; Sometimes faith is exercised with much anxiety, and sometimes with much doubting: but faith and a pure conscience joyned together, they make an excellent feast, and maketh a Christian rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Thirdly, we may draw this conclusion, If faith have influence upon the work of Sanctification, and helpeth the producing of a noble conformity to God, then, I say, there are many that their faith is a delusion, and *their hope shall be cut off as a spiders web.* There are some that have faith, that have not Sanctification, nor knows not what it is, and shall not that faith unquestionably *perish as a dream, and evanish as the vision of the night?* and therefore if ye would testifie the reality of your faith, then study more the work of sanctification. I shall but from *Job* 8. 14, 15. give you these eight properties of a hypocrites faith and hope, which may make you try and examine your self, 1. Their hope and their faith is but an act of folly, yea, there is not such an act of foolishness under Heaven, as a hypocrites hope, because it is but a Castle in the Air, and as writing to himself a charter on the sand: so that word ye have rendered, whose *hope shall be cut off*, is in the Original, *whose folly shall be cut off*, shewing this, that they build without a foundation, and so their faith must be most unsure and uncertain.

2. The

2. The thing they hope for, ſhall at laſt loath them: O hypocrites, ye hope for enjoyment of Chriſt, but be perſwaded of it, Chriſt ſhall eternally loath you, and ye ſhall eternally loath Chriſt, that is clear in that ſame word, *whoſe hope ſhall be cut off*, or as the word may be read, *whoſe hope ſhall loath them*; the thing he hoped for ſhall loath him, and Chriſt ſhall ſay, *Depart, I know you not* 3. And though ye have now much delight and pleaſure in the actings of your preſumptuous hope, yet at laſt, ye ſhall loath that hope; the word will carry, that not only the things ye hoped for ſhall loath you, but ye likewiſe ſhall loath your hope. The day is coming that ye ſhall cry forth, curſed be the day that ever I believed that I ſhould get Heaven. 4. It ſhall at laſt be the matter of his vexation, from that word, *whoſe hope ſhall be cut off*, or as the word may be rendered, *whoſe hope ſhall vex him*. O when the hypocrites ſhall meet with that anxious, that dreadful diſappointment one day, they ſhall then put their hand on their head, being aſhamed becauſe of their confidence. 5. He ſtudieth by all means to keep his hope, though it be but falſe: therefore have ye that word in the 15. verſe, *he holdeth it faſt*; or as the word is, *he keepeth it with hand and arm, with all his ſtrength* he keepeth his hope: ſo that if Chriſt would come from Heaven, and ſay, *man*, thou art a hypocrite, and thy *hope ſhall be cut off*, they would ſay, I will keep my hope, Sir, and maintain it, and that is an evidence your hope is not built upon the foundation; I love never a faith that in this ſide of time is unchangeable, and never knoweth what it is to have ups nor downs. 5. It is built always upon a wrong foundation, which is imported in that word, *he ſhall lean upon his houſe*, which we ſuppoſe may be interpreted thus, he ſhall lean upon his *worldly enjoyments*, or upon theſe ſpiritual-like enjoyments he met with. The hope of a hypocrite is never built upon Chriſt, and ſo unqueſtionably that hope ſhall be cut off, and evaniſh. 6. Let hypocrites hold faſt their hope with both their arms, I will ſay theſe three words to them; Firſt, if all

the

the Ministers should preach to you, and desire you to quite your hope, and ye will not, yet both your hope and you shall be separate, as it is in that word, *Your hope shall depart from you*, and ye shall quite it. Secondly, your hope will bring you to death, and no further, according to that word, *Job* 18. 14. *Whose hope shall bring them to the King of terrours*: Will it bring me no further, say you? O, no, *The King of terrours shall separate you and your hope*. Thirdly, the day is coming when the foundation of it shall be discovered, and there shall not be a delusion, but it shall be unfolded. The day is approaching, when Christ shall ask how you got your faith, and how you maintained it. 7. The hypocrites hope is a poor building, it is as *a spiders web*, which I conceive (without being critick) is this. The hope of hypocrites, they spin it out of their own bowels, they have it not from Christ, but as ye see a spider spin out of its own bowels, so they do out of themselves, it is no better stuff then their own rotten righteousness: Christ never begat those unto a lively hope. Let me beseech you therefore, that by all means ye would study to make sure your interest in God, and to build your faith on him, whose Name is that *munition of rocks*; For believe it, I may say it with much perswasion, I know there are many that shall once meet (if God prevent it not) with a dreadful disappointment: and therefore as ye would not incur that eternal hazard that is attending those that presumptuously take hold of a hope, before Christ take hold of them, study to search yonr hope what it is: I desire not to raze any foundation of their hope that is laid by the hand of Christ; but would desire, and charge you to raze the foundation of that hope which ye have laid from the beginning by your own hands, *and he knew it not*. I would press these three things upon you. First, O ye that are strangers to Christ, and that know not what it is to imbrace the offers of the everlasting Gospel: obey that excellent counsel, 2 *Chron*. 30. 8. *Give Christ your hand*; for that word which ye have rendered, *Yield your self to the Lord*. it is in the original,

nal, *Give your hand to God*; which is in ſhort, *Marry him*, and be content to *contract* your ſelf to him; for believe it, the day is coming, that either that contract between you and Chriſt ſhall be eternally confirmed, or that contract between the Devil and you ſhall be eternally ratified. And I ſuppoſe, there is ſo much ſpoken to the commendation of that noble Plant of Renown, that ye may take Chriſt (if ſo we may ſpeak) blindly, ye may cloſe your eyes and take him, for he ſhal never diſappoint your hope; for let you think of him to Eternity, he ſhall always be above your thoughts. Secondly, I would earneſtly deſire you once to ſearch and try what was the firſt riſe of your faith in Jeſus Chriſt: I am perſwaded of it, there are many that take up their faith at their foot, they never travelled in pain, & yet faith is brought forth. Is not this a myſtery? ſhall it be ſaid, *before they travelled, they brought forth*? I do not queſtion but there may be leſſer and greater pangs of the new birth, but this is moſt certain, there is always ſome either leſſer troubles or greater, till that child be brought forth; and yet I may condemn theſe that *ſtay too long in the place of the breaking forth of children.* Chriſt will never refuſe you when ye do really come, becauſe ye have not been ſo many years and days impriſoned to the Law. Thirdly, Let me deſire you to go and aſk, is there a grave between you and heaven, in all that way through which the Saints have travelled upon which this is written, here lyeth a man that ſincerely ſought life from Chriſt, and he denyed him; I think without encroaching too much upon the ſearching forth of the exerciſe of the Saints in Heaven, I think we may ſuppoſe, there may be in Heaven ſome *Queries* and Interrogations; Chriſt ſhall aſk, O beloved, Did ye want any thing here below when ye were ſent forth to travel in the world? and ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer, *No*: Chriſt ſhall aſk that queſtion at you, Did I not all things well? and ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer, *Yes*: Chriſt ſhall propoſe that queſtion, Are ye not well rewarded for all your pains? and ye ſhall be conſtrained to anſwer,

Yes:

Yes: O but to take him. He is the bleſſed and moſt excellent one in Heaven and in Earth, it is the beſt bargain that ever ye made: O ye Merchants that have made many excellent bargains to your own apprehenſions, will ye come and make one excellent bargain yet, that will make you eternally up? And what is that? Come and *buy Chriſt*, and take him for nothing, this is not your ordinary bargaining: there is few comes to you and biddeth you buy excellent things *without money*; but come in the Goſpel, and ye ſhall get Chriſt *without money*: O niggards that are loath to ſpend your money in the world, will ye come to Chriſt, and believe on him, take him freely: O ſay ye, If I could get three things of Chriſt, I would come. 1. I would have much gold and ſilver: I ſay come to Chriſt & ye ſhall get much gold and ſilver: is that true? It is abundantly true, See *Job* 22. 25,26. where preſſing that exhortation, *Acquaint thy ſelf with God*, and uſing many arguments, he ſaith, *Thou ſhalt lay up gold as duſt, and the gold of Ophir as the ſtones of the brooks.* Is not that gold enough? yea, ye ſhall have ſilver likewiſe, *Thou ſhalt have plenty of ſilver.* In the 26. *verſe*, ye ſhall not only have gold and ſilver, but ſhall have *plenty of it*, and ſhall have the moſt excellent and refined gold. But O ſay ye, what, will that promiſe be literally accompliſhed to me, if I come to Chriſt? I would only ſay theſe three things to thee; 1. Come to Chriſt, and if gold and ſilver be for thy advantage thou ſhalt have it literally accompliſhed. 2. I ſay, ye ſhall have as much contentment in Jeſus Chriſt, as if ye had this houſe full of gold. 3. I will ſay this to thee, Chriſt ſhall be thy gold and ſilver, according to that word in the 26. verſe, which is moſt remarkable; yea, *Almighty ſhall be thy defence*; or as is it in the Original, ſhall be thy *gold*, ſpeaking of the promiſe of gold before. Secondly, Ye ſay, I would ſay this, that what I purpoſe might be accompliſhed, I ſay, come to Chriſt and ye ſhall have that likewiſe, *Job* 22. 28. *Thou ſhalt decree a thing, and it ſhall be eſtabliſhed unto thee*; which I conceive doth not only take

take in these spiritual decrees, but likewise these that relate to temporal enjoyments. But there is a third thing I would have (say ye) and I would come to Christ, and it is, that I might have all the desires of my heart; I say, O man, and O woman, come to Christ and thou shalt have what thou desirest; this is clear from *Psal.* 37. 4. *Delight thy self in God, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart,* What can ye have man but it is there? Would ye have any thing of Christ? He putteth a blank in your hand, and saith that word which he said to *Solomon, Ask.* What would ye have, and I shall give you? Christ, as it were, putteth his Name to the foot of a clean sheet of paper, and he desireth you to ask what ye would have, and is not this an excellent bargain? O, niggard, what would ye have which ye will not get in Christ? And be perswaded that ye that refuse and will not take him, the eternal curse of all that is in Heaven will return upon thy head, the eternal curse of all the expectants of Heaven, and heirs of Life, will return upon the head of that person, that will not take Christ. And cursed, cursed shall that person be who will not take Christ, and one day *all the Congregation* in Heaven and Earth shall say, *Amen.*

SERMON VII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves: know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates.*

Assurance is a precious gift which many that live in these days do undervalue, and tread under foot; do not the Christians of these times go halting between two opinions, being neither positive that they are received *into the adoption of children*, nor yet positive that they are yet in a state of alienation, and *enemies in their minds by wicked works*; yea, & (that which

is

Is worse) there are many among us that walk with much contentment under their uncertainty. I think it is a fault to be condemned in many, they pursue more to satisfie their sense for the present, nor to have a solid well grounded assurance for time to come: I could wish that all the debates and questions of these days, that take up so much of our time, and so much of our spirits from better things, were happily drowned in these four excellent questions, which without controversie are of greatest concernment for all to have resolved, 1. Where shall I rest all night when the long shadows of the evelasting evening shall be stretched out upon me, and whether or not hath Christ gone before to take up a place for me in his Fathers house? 2. It is a soul-concerning question, *Master, what shall I do to inherite eternal life?* to be asking at him that can sweetly resolve you. And 3. not to rest there, but to be crying forth in the morning, *what shall I do to be saved*, and to be crying out in the evening, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* 4. It is sweet to be asking seriously, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth?* There is much of our time spent in asking news from Court, and from abroad, concerning the revolutions of States and Kingdoms: But I suppose, it were better to ask, what news from Heaven concerning thy self, and what news from within, and news of thy bride-grooms coming? for these are great Courts, I mean the Court of Heaven, and the Court of Conscience, the affairs of which, a Christian should endeavour much to know. 5. It is a soul-concerning question, that a Christian should be much in proposing to himself, *what shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?* It is certain, we must say, that our Faith and assurance, and all our other mercies are from him, and yet alace, we are negligent in praises, we may with *Tamar* rent our garments of *divers colours*, even the *garments of the Kings daughters*, because of spiritual whoredom against God, and our ingratitude to him.

Now having spoken unto you at so great a length,

of

of that precious and fundamental grace of Faith, we have thought fit to shut up all in speaking a little upon these words we now have read, concerning the evidence and assurance of Faith. The Apostle in this Chapter is vindicating his Ministry and Apostleship, from the contempt that was cast upon it, he proveth he was a Minister of the New Testament, called and sent of God, by the blessing and success he had among them, in that he had not plowed nor threshed in vain; and they being so much in censuring his way, and seeking an account of his Ministry: In these words, he doth (as it were) draw them off by a holy diversion unto another business, as if he had said to them, O *Corinthians*, I will divert you from the exercise of judging me, and will lead you into an exercise that is more divine and profitable; be much in judging and examining your selves; and indeed, it is a truth worth our observation. that if we were more in judging of our selves, we would be less in judging others; but alace there are some of us, we are so much abroad, that we cannot be much at home.

In the words, there is these six things considerable, First, that there is such a thing attainable by a Christian while he is here, as a distinct perswasion and assurance that he is in the Faith, and hath an interest in Christ, *by being in the Faith*; here is not to be understood a being in the *Doctrine of Faith* only, but it is to be understood of principally, being indeed and really united to Christ by Faith. Secondly, that the seeking after assurance, is a necessary commanded duty, for ye see here the words are very imperative, *Examine your selves, prove your selves.* Thirdly, that there are many mistakes and delusions among people, concerning that noble and excellent thing *Assurance*, there being many that keep fast a hope which Christ shall once discountenance and sweep away: like a *spiders web*, and this is imported in these words, *Examine your selves*, or as the word may be rendered, *Take an accurate and an experimented search of your selves,*

selves, try your selves, or *prove your selves*; it is a word that is borrowed from the Gold-smiths fining and trying of Gold. And so his putting of the *Corinthians* to so accurate a search of themselves, saith this clearly to us, there are many mistakes concerning this thing, many do pass a decreet in their own favours, before Christ hath passed his approbation of them. Fourthly, Take notice of this from the words, that there is much and exceeding much advantage, by trying and searching whether we be in the faith or no. This is imported in his doubling the exhortation. Fifthly, that one most excellent and spiritual way of attaining assurance, whether we be in the faith or no; is self-examination, and putting our self to the tryal, as if he had said, would ye have a distinct perswasion that ye are in Christ, then be much in the exercise of self-examination. For the rest of the words of the verse, we intend not to handle.

As to the first, that there is such a thing attainable, I shall only propose these reasons unto you to make it evident, 1. It is known in Scripture that the Saints of old have in an ordinary way attained to distinct perswasion of their interest in Christ, *Song* 6. *My beloved is mine and I am his*, and *Rom.* 8, 38. *I am perswaded* (saith the Apostle) *that neither death nor life*, &c. *shall be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ*, and 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *For we know, if this our earthly tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house with God not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.* 2. It is the great scope of many Scriptures, to shew how Christians may attain to assurance, 1 *Joh.* 1. 13. *These things I write unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life.* The great end and design of *John*, writing in these Epistles, is to make a soul acquaint with Christ, and to make them to accept of him, and to give them a distinct assurance that Christ hath accepted them. 3. There are many commands in Scripture for Christians to be serious in searching after assurance. 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Wherefore brethren give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* 4. It is the blessed end of Gods

oath

oath in the everlasting Covenant, that a Christian might get assurance. What was the great ground and great end that God confirmed his Covenant with an oath, was it not? *Heb.*6.18. *That by two immutable things, wherein it was impossible for God to lie, ye might have strong consolation.* 5. If assurance of our interest in Christ were not attainable, then these precious graces of joy and love could not be well exercised: If a Christian were evermore in the dark concerning his interest in Christ, he could not give obedience to that exhortation, *Rejoyce evermore, again, I say, rejoyce.* 6. The Scripture hath set down these means by which a Christian may win to assurance: as is clear, 1 *Joh* 3. 18, 19, 2 *Pet.* 4, 5. compared with *verse* 10. where the Apostle *Peter* pressing the Doctrine of making our calling and election sure, he setteth down these excellent means by which they may win to it, and doubtless the marks and evidences that are registrate in the Scripture of a gracious state, do assure us, that assurance is attainable: 7. What are the ends of the Sacraments? but that our assurance may be confirmed, and that our faith may be strengthned, the two Sacraments are the two great Seals of Heaven that are put to the Charter of the Covenant.

Now as to the application, and the more full improvement of this first point, I shall only offer these considerations, 1. I would have it taken notice of, that though grace and assurance be two lovers, yet there is no such bond of union between them, that the one cannot consist with the other; A Christian may have the real grace of God, and yet walk in darkness and no light; a Christian may be going to Heaven, and yet that word oftentimes in his mouth, *I am cut off from thy sight*; yea, are there not even some who have had assurance, and some time a day have been admitted to draw that conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who are now under darkness concerning their interest, and in much bitterness of spirit, do sometimes cry out, *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.* But therefore, let

let me say this one word, both to weak ones who never had assurance,and deserted ones who have lost it; when ye miss assurance, beware of drawing such negative conclusions concerning your graces, but when ye sit in darkness and see no light, *Trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay your selves upon your God*; that is, when ye cannot reach the faith of assurance, be much in maintaining of adherence: remember *Jobs* divinity, *Though thou should kill me, yet will I trust in thee*; and consider that sweet word, *He will keep them in perfect peace whose hearts are stayed on him.*

My second consideration is, That since assurance is attainable, ye would study to find out and remove these things that doth hinder you from attaining unto it. And that we may help you in this, we conceive that the obstructions of a Christians assurance,are especially in these two, 1. Our mistaking of the Lords dealing towards us. And, 2. Our untender and unsuitable dealing towards him.

Of the first sort we shall lay before you these five, The first is, want of favourable returns of prayer; this often maketh a Christian to debate his interest, and call in question his evidences, *Lam.* 3. 8. compared with *verse* 18. *I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayers*: and this is the conclusion of that dispensation, *verse* 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*: and this is especially occasioned when the Christian is most serious and fervent in prayer, and then he meeteth not with a return, this maketh them exceedingly debate their interest. And I confess, it is a sad dispensation to meet with a silent Christ in prayer; but yet that needeth not make a believer question all, and debate the reality of his interest in God, since the dearest of all children of the kingdom have been so dealt with, even a *David*, Psal. 2. 21. *Cryed night and day without silence*, and is not heard, but cryeth out, *Why art thou so far from helping, and from the words of my roaring*; yea, that passage may relate to him who was *the root and off-spring of David*, for even he was so dealt with, and had not presently a sensible

ſenſible return, when he had prayed thrice, *that the cup might paſe from him.*

Secondly, the want of ſenſible enlargement and liberty in prayer.that he never goeth to his knees, but his heart beginneth to die like a ſtone within him,then he cryeth forth that word, 2 *Cor.* 3.17. *where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*: and ſure if I had the Spirit of the Lord, I would have liberty in the exerciſe of prayer; and that this is a riſe of the diſputing of our intereſt is clear from *Pſal.*77. 4. compared with verſe 7,and 9. ſaith *David, I am ſore troubled that I cannot ſpeak*, I have no liberty in prayer, I never go to God in prayer, but (as it were) my tongue ſticketh to the roof of my mouth; he from hence draweth that concluſion, *Hath God forgotten to be gracious, and hath he in wrath ſhut up his tender mercies for ever?* I confeſs this alſo is a ſad diſpenſation to meet with an abſent and vailed Chriſt in prayer; ſo that we can never go to ſeek God in ſecret, but we may write this upon our prayers, *He is gone, he is gone*, eſpecially when we have loſt that liberty that formerly we have had: and therefore is *Davids* perplexity much heightned,*verſ.* 5, 6. from his *remembring his ſong in the night, and his calling to mind the years of ancient times*: yet we may remember how ſoon *David* wrote his retractions, as to that ſad concluſion, *I ſaid this is my infirmity*; ver. 10. and ſo ſhould we do when upon every ſtraitning in prayer, we begin to queſtion all the Lords kindneſs towards us.

A third obſtruction of aſſurance, is a Chriſtians wreſtling with his corruptions painfully and ſeriouſly, and yet not meeting with any ſenſible victory over them, but upon the contrair, their corruptions ſeem to be ſtronger, & they themſelves ſeem to be weaker, and then it is, they ſtrengthen their miſbelief, but that word, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himſelf even as he is pure*: And indeed, this is a knot that is not eaſily looſed, but when he ſeeth his idols and corruptions prevailing over him, he will cry out, *I am gone, and there is no hope in Iſrael concerning*

concerning this thing, and yet this also is a word in haste, *Paul* hath registrate himself a standing witness even after he was a chosen vessel, *Rom.*7. How strangely a child of God may be born down with a *body of death* even under most serious wrestlings against it; And therefore if thou seriously maintain that combat though thou do not sensibly prevail, thou hast no reason upon that ground to weaken thy assurance.

Fourthly, When a Christian is put to more then ordinarly outward affliction, when God doth dispense sadly unto them in outward things, they then begin to call in question their interest and dispute their assurance, this is clear, by comparing *Lament.* 3. verse 18. with the preceeding words, where speaking of the sad dispensations they meet with, he draweth that conclusion in verse 18. *My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord*, and *Joh.* 2. 4. where he draweth that conclusion from such a promise, *I am now cast out of thy sight*, the Devil he taketh *Eliphaz* divinity and presents it to a Christian; *Call now if there be any to answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou go?* As if he had said, did thou ever know a Christian afflicted, so as thou art afflicted, and so he would have *Job* to quite his integrity; But yet we know all these blessed ones, for all their afflictions were dear unto the Lord, and had their interest secure in him, yea, *as many as he loveth, he doth rebuke and chastin*, and it is the bastards and not sons on whom he will not bestow a rod, and therefore we ought not to quarrel our interest because of afflictions.

And lastly, The rise of a Christians discouragement and that which hindered their assurance, is, when their former experience of the manifestations of God doth not relish to them, and when the promises upon which they have built become tasteless unto them *as the white of an egg*, and when they meet not with God in Ordinances, but these become lifeless, when these three rise together upon them; their case becomes very perplexed oftentimes: and this also seemed to have been *Davids* case, *Psal.* 77. When *he remembred*

bred his ſong in the night, and the days of old, and yet had no ſweetneſs in them, then he breaketh forth into theſe bitter complaints which are there expreſſed: but yet as we ſaid before, this was his infirmity, and there is no reaſon for a Chriſtian to queſtion his intereſt upon ſuch account; becauſe the Ordinances are not at all times alike lively even to the beſt, and the Lord is not always preſent, but though ſometimes the *candle of the Lord doth ſhine upon his head*, yet at other times he is neceſſitate to cry out, *O that it were with me as in months paſt.*

The ſecond ſort of obſtructions of a Chriſtians aſſurance, I mean ſuch as flow from our untender dealing towards God, are,

Firſt, A guilty conſcience, that is a remarkable word, 1 *Tim.* 3. 9. *Holding the myſtery of faith in a pure conſcience*, It telleth us, that this excellent grace of Faith cannot bide, but in a cleanly lodging, even in *a pure conſcience*, and when a Chriſtian ſetteth about to believe, he will know how a guilty conſcience will flee in his face, and cry out, *O adventure not to believe, dare thou believe*, the guiltineſs of a Chriſtians conſcience maketh him oft to cry out, *Touch not the mountain leſt thou be thruſt thorow*: and I tell you three diſadvantages of a guilty conſcience, 1. It obſtructeth a Chriſtians boldneſs in making applications to Chriſt; his heart ſaith *cloſe*, and his neceſſity ſaith *cloſe*; but his guilty conſcience cryeth out, *O ſtand a back* and do not *cloſe*. 2. A guilty conſcience oftentimes it hindreth the diſcoveries of Chriſt to the ſoul, and doth ſo affright and terrifie, yea, it will ſo ſting and bite us, that when he revealeth himſelf, we cannot take notice, when he would lay on a plaiſter, our ſouls will tear it off, *and refuſe to be comforted*. 3. It doth exceedingly obſtruct our going about duty. O but our ſoul moves ſlowly in the paths of God when we are under the power of a guilty conſcience.

The ſecond obſtruction is, That we are not much in the exerciſe of tenderneſs. O but if a Chriſtian were tender, and if in every ſtep of his life he deſired *to*

Chriſt before his eyes, he would eaſily win to much aſſurance, according to that word, *Iſai.* 64. 5. *Thou meeteſt him that rejoyceſt and worketh righteouſneſs, and theſe that remember thee in thy ways*; Would ye know the aſſured Chriſtian, it is the tender Chriſtian: that Chriſtian that doth not crucifie convictions, the Chriſtian that breaketh not reſolutions, the Chriſtian that doth not fit calls and opportunities to prayer, the Chriſtian that ſaith not of any ſin, *it is a little one*, or the Chriſtian that ſearcheth always, watcheth always, examineth always, and is always caſting out ſin, and that is the aſſured Chriſtian.

The third objection is, The want of the exerciſe of the grace of fear, we are not much under this diſpoſition, to fear the Lord and his goodneſs: this is clear from that word, *Pſal.* 25. 14. *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will ſhew to them his Covenant.* I think there are theſe two great evidences, that much of the power of godlineſs is gone from ſome of our hearts: we fear God no more, nor if we were his companion: and we fear our ſelves no more nor if we had not a deceitful heart within us, we neither fear God nor our ſelves, and that ſpeaketh that much of the life of Religion is loſt amongſt us. The fifth thing that doth much obſtruct our aſſurance is, much *worldly-mindedneſe*, and eager purſuit after the things of a preſent life, that is remarkable, 2 *Cor.* 4. verſe laſt, compared with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We look not unto the things that are ſeen*, that is, we are not much taken up with the things of a preſent world, which the men of the world ſeek and delight themſelves in. and it is ſubjoyned, *For we know that if this our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a houſe not made with hands*, ſo we ſee aſſurance and mortification to the world are much knit together. Would ye know where to find our hearts, the moſt part of us are converſing with idols of the world; would ye know where to find our hearts, they are amongſt the vanities of the world. O how true is that word, *Pſ.* 39. *Man walks in a vain ſhew*; what is man in all his actings, but as one

walking

walking in a long gallery that is set about with pictures, gazing on these things, and saluting them all, as if they were living *Kings* and *Queens*, and great persons that could do him good; and so our pursuing after the world, is nothing else but a *dead shadow* pursuing after *dead shadows*, a man that is but a short living shadow pursuing after vanity and nothing, and thus he fools away his time, forgetting to make sure *the one thing necessary*.

5. Want of distinct apprehensions of these three, the infinite love of Christ, the infinite power of Christ, and the infinite wisdom of Christ; there is not an objection O Christians that ye have from the multitude of your sins, but it may be drowned in infinite love, there is not an objection that ye have from the strength of your idols, but it may be drowned in that immense ocean of the infinite power of Christ; there is not an objection ye have from your wants, or about your evil nature, but ye may drown it in the infinite wisdom and goodness of Christ, and there can be nothing against your assurance, but may be sweetly answered also from these rightly applyed, taken up and rested on by the soul. The last thing which hindereth our assurance, is, the smalness of the measure of grace that we have attained; for when grace is small, it is hard to be discerned, and therefore, if ye would have assurance, learn not to ly still and dispute, but to rise up and to increase your stock, and then you shall know ye are rich: *Grow in grace and in the knowledge of God*, and by this, *ye shall know, if ye follow on to know the Lord*.

The third consideration is, that assurance is not bestowed at all times, but there are some special times and seasons when God giveth a Christian a broad sight of his interest, and I shall but name these.

The first is, when he is first converted, and Christ and he joyns hands together, even then sometimes the best rob is put upon the prodigal son, and the fatted calf is killed, and a ring is put upon his hand, and shoes upon his feet, *Acts* 9. 17. *Paul* meeteth with assurance immediatly after his conversion, 1 *Joh.*

2. 12, 14. *I write unto you little children, because ye have known the Father*; and before that in the 12. *verse*, *I write unto you little children, because your sins are forgiven you*; so that when a Christian is brought unto Christ, he will (as it were) lead them to the Registers of Heaven, and say, friend come and see, here is your name written from eternity: But do not mistake me, I do not say, this is always so, but these whom Christ converteth through the thunderings of the Law, these most frequently meet with intimation of the pardon of their sins, and peace of God, even at their first acquaintance, I know there are some Christians, that if ye ask at them when they were begotten to a lively hope, they would say that word that the blind man once said, *One thing I know, I was once blind, but now I see*; but for the time and the day, I know not when it was.

The second time is, when they are wrestling with God like Princes in Prayer, and watching unto that exercise, *Dan.* 9. 23. compared with the preceeding *verse*, he being much and serious in prayer, doth meet with that word from heaven, *O man, greatly beloved*, or as the word is, *O man of desires*: and *Acts* 10. 2, 3, 4. when *Cornelius* is much in the exercise of watching and *Prayer*, he seeth a vision, and getteth intimation of his peace with God; and *Jacob* when he was wrestling with God, *Gen.* 32. he hath that testimony given him, *Thou hast as a Prince wrestled with God and prevailed.*

The third time is, when a Christian is passing through the gates of death, and is upon the borders of Eternity: I desire not to be mistaken in this neither; I know some Christians are led to heaven thorow a dark trance, so as they never see a blink of the countenance of Christ, until the day come that they get him in their arms eternally within his Fathers house. Some Christians when they go through the gates of death, they may be disputing of this question, *where am I going?* But this is certain, that sometimes, yea, oftentimes Christ will dispense a broad sight of a Christians interest unto him at the day of death,

2 *Sam.*

2 *Sam* 23. 5. when was it that *David* sang that song, which hath strengthned thoutands in the very jaws of death, *God hath made with me an everlasting Covenant*, was it not when death was shaking hands with him? and 2 *Tim* 4 8. When was it that *Paul* sang that song, *I have fought the good fight of faith, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness?* was it not even then when he was ready to depart, *and to be offered up?* and when was it when old *Simeon* did sing that blessed song. *Luk.* 2. 29. *Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*, was it not within a step of death, as it were, he went to heaven with Christ in his arms, or rather in his heart he carried Christ with him, and found Christ before him, and so death to *Simeon* was a change of his place, and not a change of his company.

The fourth time is, when he is to be put to some hard and difficult duty: Before *Abraham* be put to forsake his native land, and become a stranger and a wanderer, he meeteth with sweet intimations of his interest, *Gen.* 12.2, *I will make of thee a great nation*, and *verse* 7. *The Lord appeared unto Abraham*; and before *Jeremiah* be sent a Preacher unto a rebellious people he will have that word spoken unto him, *I know thee, before thou was brought forth.*

The fifth time is, when a Christian hath done some singular act of obedience, when *Abraham* had obeyed the Lord, and was content to offer up his *Isaac*, he meeteth with a sight of his interest and covenant renewed to him with an oath, *Gen.* 22. 16. *By my self I have sworn, because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withholden thy son, even thy only son, blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying, I will multiply thee as the stars of heaven.*

The sixth time is, when a Christian is to meet with hard tryals, difficulties and afflictions in the world, then they usually meet with assurance, and so *Gen.* 28. 14,15,16. before *Jacob* go to serve *Laban*, he meeteth with intimation of his peace with God.

The ſeventh time is, when a Chriſtian is under ſad perſecution and affliction, then will the Lord give a word from heaven to comfort him, and aſſure him of his fatherly love and mercy: When was it that Chriſt left that noble Legacy to his Diſciples, *Joh.* 14. *verſ.* 27. *My peace I leave with you, my peace I give you*: was it not when he himſelf was to leave them to troubleſome and ſorrowful days, in a perſecuting world.

The eighth time is at ſome ſolemn Ordinances and approaches to God, the days of a Communion to a tender Chriſtian have been ſweet days, when Chriſt hath come to the ſoul, and ſaid, *Behold me, behold me*; I think the eleven Apoſtles met with much aſſurance of their intereſt in Chriſt at the Communion they were at with him: O what ſweet intimations were theſe, *This is my body which is broken for you*, and *this cup is the New Teſtament in my blood ſhed for you*; and a little after, *you are they which have continued with me in my tentation, and I appoint unto you a kingdom.*

We come now to the ſecond point which we propoſed from the words, *viz.* That as aſſurance is a thing which may be attained; ſo to ſeek after it, it is a neceſſary duty: let me not be miſtaken, as if I had ſaid, the having of aſſurance were ſimply neceſſary to Salvation; no, that were a Doctrine as comfortleſs upon the other hand, as the Popiſh doctrine of the impoſſibility of aſſurance is upon the other: But the thing I ſay, is, that the Chriſtian ſeeking after aſſurance, and his real endeavouring to attain unto it, is a neceſſary command of God, which he hath bound upon the conſciences of his Children, among other Goſpel-duties; And certainly, we need go no further for the clearing of this then the Text it ſelf, what meaneth theſe peremptory Injunctions, *Examine your ſelves whether ye be in the faith or not: Prove your own ſelves: Know ye not, &c.* but if ye will, ye may add that word, 2 *Pet.* 1. verſe 5. and 10. compared, what can be more expreſly commanded, and more ſtrongly preſſed,

preſſed, then that Chriſtians ſhould bend their utmoſt endeavours for attaining unto this bleſſed condition of aſſurance: *Give diligence*, yea, *give all diligence*, yea, *the rather give all diligence to make your calling and election ſure.*

From this we ſhall only lay before you theſe conſiderations, 1. If the ſeeking after aſſurance be a neceſſary duty, then theſe three things are moſt lamentable. Firſt, That there are ſo many in this generation *who are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not waſhed from their iniquity*; they flatter themſelves with a rotten aſſurance, that hath no other foundation but their own imagination, they never knew ſince the firſt day they were Baptized, and did begin to profeſs Chriſt, what it was to mortifie one luſt, nor ſeriouſly to wreſtle againſt one temptation and yet they want not a ſtrong perſwaſion of their intereſt in Chriſt: But ah, will ye ſtand in aw, leſt ye meet with ſuch a dreadful diſappointment, as (when ye think ye are in the very gate of heaven) even then to fall backwards to the very bottom of hell, and when ye expect a kindly welcome from the Lord of Glory, as one who thinks you have been in Covenant with him this many years, yet meet with that dreadful ſummons, *Depart from me ye curſed, I know you not.*

2. How ſad may we be upon this account, that howbeit aſſurance be an attainable thing, and a great many dare not ſay they have attained it; yet ſo little diligence is uſed in purſuing after it: Is it not very lamentable, that many of you to whom I am ſpeaking, ſince firſt ye gave up your names to Chriſt in a viſible way, and were reputed amongſt the generation of the ſeekers of his face, ſcarce ever ſet a day, or an hour apart to examine whether ever indeed you were in Chriſt or not. Alas, is heaven of ſo little moment, is the having or wanting all the enjoyments which are there of ſo ſmall concernment to you, that ye will not be at the pains as once to enquire after your intereſt in the matter? what if any of you were but poſſeſſors of a thouſand pound, and your intereſt or right unto it

uncertain and questionable, would not your sleep depart from you, and your rest be unquiet till you had made it more secure? What think you shall the men of this generation answer in the day of the Lord for neglecting *that one thing necessary*; when they have been so vexing themselves *about many things*, and have been so serious in so many consultations to make sure a worm eaten portion in a perishing world, that the whole wit of men and Angels cannot secure for one moment? It is certain, the root of all slothfulness is Atheism. It is not possible that we believe as really there is a heaven, as we believe there is an earth, or that the world to come is as real as that which is present; or else it must be a strange power in these lusts that keeps us captive, that we are never suffered to think upon eternity, nor to ask where we must lodge when this cottage we carry about shall fall about our ears. O will ye think upon it, how serious and pressing that command is, 2 *Pet.* 1. 10. *Give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure.* When the Lord saith, *Give all diligence*, will ye give no diligence; and when he saith, *make your calling and election sure*, will ye leave all upon uncertainty? *I said to the foolish, deal not so foolishly.*

2. It is most lamentable, that since assurance is attainable, yet men live contentedly under the want thereof. How strange is it that many are so seldome on their knees complaining of their uncertainty? If Christ were precious unto you, would it be so? I am sure there are some of us here that have had the name of Christians, I know not how long, that never had one sad thought about the want of assurance: when we look upon the desolations, vastations and plunderings in the world, how many of us can cry out, *They have taken away my gods, and what have I more?* But when we speak of heaven, we care not who deprive us of our portion there. I will not limit the Lord, nor determine what he may do, but believe it, it is one to a thousand, if many Christians of this age have a pleasant night, & comfortable closing of their eyes, they are such undervalue

of assurance: I may fear that lamentation shall be heard upon the death beds of many, *O poor wretched wandering soul, where art thou going?* and it is no wonder it come to this, when we are so long in beginning to ask the question. And now I close with this one thing, that I think beyond all question, the souls that live contentedly under the want of assurance, are *the careless daughters that dwelleth at ease*: Christ and they are at a remarkable distance, it must be a cold winter, and dark night (at best) as to their present fellowship with God.

A second consideration from this point is, that if the seeking after assurance be so necessary a duty, then let me beseech you to ponder with your selves what means are fit for you to use that ye may attain it, and if ye enquire what these means are, I shall only lay before you some few,

1. That ye would be much in the exercise of faith, I mean the direct acts of faith, whereby the sinner, from the sense and feeling of his wants, layeth hold on Jesus Christ, closing with him, and leaning upon him for a full supply out of his fulness: for indeed, there are two great faults amongst the Lords people; 1. Some do seek assurance of faith, before ever they seek to have faith. 2. Some are much more taken up in debating their evidences, whether they be real or not, then they are in strengthning their evidences, so that most of their time is spent in questioning: O! is this a real evidence of assurance? whereas more actual believing in Christ, and gripping to the promises, and less disputing, were the shorter and surer way; that word is most clear, *Eph.* 1. 13. *After ye believed, ye were sealed with the spirit of promise*, that is, ye got assurance, but not before ye believed; and ye know it is said, *Mat* 9. 2. And *when Jesus saw their faith, he said, son, be of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven thee*; so then it is clear, that to be much in believing, is the neareſt way to assurance.

2. Ye would be much in believing the general truths and promises of the Gospel, and frequently meditating

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of them; all assurance is by a practical syllogism; the first whereof must needs be a Scripture-truth; And certainly, the firm assent to that truth, and the souls delightful meditation on it, is often blessed of the Lord, as a special mean whereby the conscience is helped to make the assumption, and also to bring forth the conclusion; For instance, we see with what strength of affection *Paul* acteth his faith on that word, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came to save sinners*, and presently see what followeth on it, *Of whom I am the chief*, then is his assurance; for doubtless he meant, that he was the chief *of saved sinners*; yea, certainly, a sinner thus exercising himself, will often find so much sweetness in the general truths, that he cannot but put to his own name.

3. Be diligent in the exercise of all spiritual graces and Christian duties, that this is among the best means of attaining to assurance, is manifest from 2 *Pet.* 1. *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*; for indeed it is very observable, that the diligence there mentioned, is not a diligence in disputing and questioning about our election; but a diligence in the practice of duties and graces, as is clear from verse 5. *Give all diligence* (saith the Apostle) Whereto? In adding *to your faith vertue, to your vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance*, &c. and then verse 8. *If ye do all these things, ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*: he doth not say in the knowledge of the *Lord Jesus Christ* simply, but of *our* Lord Jesus; importing, that the result of diligence in these graces, shall be the knowledge of Christ as ours, and of our interest in him; and then he addeth (upon the other hand) *he that lacketh these things, is blind and cannot see afar off*, this is, he cannot see far in any spiritual matter, and so not in the matter of his interest. O therefore, think not that ye will get assurance by lying down with the sluggard upon your bed, or by your formal prayer, or your anxious debates, but if ever ye come to assurance,

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ye must be striving, as in an agony; for so the word importeth, which is used to express our diligence in Christian duties.

4. As ye would be diligent, so if ever ye would come to assurance, ye would be tender and circumspect in your walking, that is a clear word, *Psal.* 50. last verse, *To him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I shew the salvation of God*; and *Isa.* 32. *The effect of righteousness is peace and assurance for ever.* Ah the untender walk that many of us have: it is no wonder to see us walk in darkness, such stinking gross vapors that ariseth off our conversation, cannot but engender clouds that hinder us from seeing God, and certainly such pearls as *Assurance*, is not given to dogs and swine, lest they tread upon them.

SERMON VIII.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

THere are two great ballances into which men do weigh themselves; there are some that weigh themselves in the ballance of deceit, who think that in all their labours there is no iniquity to be found, yet God who is the weigher of the spirit, when he shall weigh them, will engrave this upon their forehead, *Thou art weighed in the ballance and art found light*: O but there are many who approve themselves, whom Christ shall never approve; There are many that call God *Father*, whom he will not call *Children*, and many that call Christ *Husband*, whom he will not call *Spouse*. 2. There are some who weigh themselves in the ballance of the Sanctuary who upon solid and most spiritual grounds do draw this conclusion, *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me*, who can with boldness and confidence look

Chriſt in the face, and ſay, *thou art mine*, and with much ſpiritual confidence, take him in their arms, and cry out, he ſhall be eternally mine; and ſure there is not a more pleaſant life than to be taking him every day in our arms, and to be crying out, *Am I not made up in him? Am I not made up in him?*

Before I come to the words, there are three great and moſt ſoul-concerning errours amongſt the Chriſtians of theſe dayes, that we deſire ye may conſider. 1. There are many that are more deſirous to know what they are, then what they ſhould do: there are ſome are more taken up to know whether they be juſtified and ſanctified; then to be indeed juſtified and ſanctified; and they are more deſirous to know if they be in Chriſt, then indeed to be in him: and therefore we find many who do ſpend a great deal more time diſputing that queſtion, *whether am I in Chriſt or not?* then they do in uſing of theſe means by which real union and communion with him may be attained; But oh, will ye once ſtudy more to be in him, and that ſhall be the ſhorteſt way to attain to the knowledge of your being in him. The ſecond great errour is, that ſome are more deſirous to know what they ſhould do, then they are deſirous to do what they know. Are there not many of us that have this queſtion, *wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord*, and yet we do not know his Commandment is with us, that we *ſhould do juſtly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.* A third errour is, that we are more in talking of Chriſt, then in believing in him, or cloſing with him; Some of us think to win to heaven by diſcourſes, if we can talk of Chriſt, we think all is without debate or controverſie; but alace, there are many who were ſweet talkers of Chriſt, that are curſing him this day in hell. And I would only ſay this by the way, If there be any of you, that have win to any ſoul-perſwaſion of your intereſt in Chriſt, I intreat you if ye can put the concluſion upon record, that in ſuch a day, of ſuch a month, and ſuch a year of God, you did then win to cry out, *I am my blovedꝭ,*

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and he is mine; it seemeth to have been *Davids* practice, *Psal.* 16. 2. *O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord*; and it was *Jeremiahs* practice, *Lam.* 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul.* I say, ye should even mark that conclusion as they did, that when tentations come, and begin to assault you, you may look on your record that ye have set down, and be ashamed to misbelieve. It is true, that for a little while our assurance at best will be but ebbing and flowing; but I hope ere long we shall be above the reach of misbelief, and above the reach of fears; I hope ere long we shall dispute no more, we shall be jealous no more, and we shall question our interest no more, when all our disputings and questionings shall be sweetly drowned in that infinite ocean of eternal delight and fruition of God. O *expectants of heaven, expectants of heaven,* are ye not looking after this day, are ye not looking after it: I know not what we do here, if we be not walking forward every day: he is upon hi way, O to see him, we would even stand and wonder at him: I hope the day is coming when we shall never lose our grips of Christ any more, he is coming, he is coming; and I think if Christ would give a pass, we would long to go hence; O what streets are these that are there? is there any here who is groaning for heaven, be of good comfort, I hope ere long he shall come, he shall come and wash all tears from your eyes.

Now at the last occasion, when we spake upon these words, we told you that there was five or six things which we intended to consider in them. The first was, that such a thing as a distinct and well grounded perswasion of our interest in Christ was attainable: and of this we have already spoken. The second thing is, That concerning this noble and excellent thing Assurance, there are many mistakes among the people of God; and to make this evident, it is clear first in this Text, from that serious and accurate search in this matter, which the Apostle putteth these people unto, as we cleared unto you from the force of the words, and

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his doubling of these exhortations, *try your own selves, prove your own selves.* 2. From the many commands which the Lord hath left upon record that we should not be mistaken concerning our assurance, 1 *Cor.* 3. 18. *Let no man deceive himself.* Gal. 6. 3. *If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,* and therefore doth the Apostle add, *Let every one prove his own work,* and verse 7, *Be not deceived.* 3. The point is clear from this, that we find in Scripture many who have been mistaken most dreadfully in the matter of their assurance, *Hos.* 8. *Israel cryeth out, my God, we know thee,* and yet Israel was in a great mistake: for in the words following, *vers.* 3. *Israel had cast off the thing that was good*: and *Pro.* 30. *ver.* 12. we find there a *generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed away from their iniquities.* 4. It is clear from this, that it is a great design of Satan, the great deceiver, that we might be mistaken about that noble & weighty point of our assurance, of being in Christ: Is there not a power given unto him from Christ to deceive the nations? I may say, that in no point doth he more prevail to deceive us, then in this, if profanity kill its *thousands*, delusion kills ten *thousands*, and this delusion its *twenty thousands.* Lastly, doth not this prove how much a Christian may be mistaken in the matter of his assurance, even that name which is given to our hearts, *Jer.* 17. 9. *It is deceitful above all things, and desperatly wicked, who can know it?* no doubt this may shew us (though there were no more) how ready our hearts are to deceive us, making us to entertain a delusion in stead of truth, and imbrace a shadow in stead of substance.

The next thing that we have to speak to you upon this point, is to shew you where these mistakes do ly, and what are these false grounds by which so many do deceive their own souls in this matter; and here there are two sorts of persons whom we must inform. 1. There be some who upon most unwarrantable grounds do conclude, that their interest in Christ is sure, when indeed it is not. 2. There be some (upon the other hand)

hand) who from sad mistakes of themselves, and the Lords dealing towards them, deny that they have an interest, when indeed they have. The first sort are the worst, and in the most dangerous condition, and they build upon these six false foundations, which we beseech them to consider.

The first is, their supposed sensible enjoyments, some Christians in these times especially, do meet with some flashes of light and joy which they have not been (it may be) acquainted with before, or at least not in such a measure, or in such a sensible manner, and upon this they presently cry forth, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* I shall not dispute with such about the reality of these enjoyments, or how they come to know that these are such as proceed from a saving work of the Spirit of grace, but waving that debate; give me leave to say this much of all enjoyments and sensible manifestations (as to the point in hand) they may be sometime a good supporter to underprop a Christians assurance when it tottereth, but never a good foundation whereon he may lay the first stone of that building: and therefore he is the wiser Christian who first tryeth the reality of his interest in Christ by other blessed fruits of righteousness and holiness, before he trust the reality of sensible enjoyments, how sweet or comfortable soever they may seem to be.

2. Some build their assurance upon the number and bulk of their duties, without considering the frame of their spirit, and the principle from which they flow; they use prayer, and reading, and conference, they wait upon ordinances, and are always there where the means is thought to be most powerful: and upon this they take up themselves in their own arms, blessing themselves, as that poor man, *Luke* 18. *I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all that I possess*: but alace, they do not consider that they *do but build their houses upon the sand*, which the first blast of a temptation will overturn, because not only all our duties, when weighed in the ballance, may be found light, but when put to the tryal

tryal may be found empty, dead and lifeleſs things, wherein the Lords ſoul can have no pleaſure.

3. Some are miſtaken in the matter of their aſſurance, by judging themſelves by the law, not knowing, or not regarding the ſpiritual meaning thereof: *Paul* was a gallant man (in his own apprehenſion) when he was without the law, that is, when he knew not the ſpiritual meaning of the law, he thought himſelf the moſt eminent Saint in all his Nation; and as he ſheweth us, *Phil.* 3. he could compare with any of them; but when the Lord opened his eyes, we ſee he put himſelf laſt in the roll of Saints, and firſt in the roll of ſinners, *Rom.* 7. *He was alive without the Law*, that is, he thought himſelf living and reigning above his ſins; but *when the Commandment came*, that is, when it came to his knowledge, and he ſaw the ſpirituality of it, *ſin revived and he died*, he then ſaw how that he had triumphed before the victory, he ſaw all his ſins alive, and, as it were, riſen from the dead, and himſelf a dead man, loſt and undone in the eſtate he was in. O how many are there amongſt us in *Pauls* firſt condition? *alive without the Law*. O how many deſtroy themſelves with this, they think there is not a ſin forbidden in all the Law of God but only *Ten*, but alace, thou fool, thou *erreſt in this, not knowing the Scriptures*: Should thou not judge thy ſelf by that ſpiritual extent of the meaning of the Law, and that divine commentary which the Apoſtle *James* hath ſet forth upon it, wherein he ſheweth thee, *That if thou be guilty of the breach of one point, thou art guilty of all*; and by that infallible expoſition which Chriſt himſelf the bleſſed Law-giver hath ſet down, *Mat.* 6. whereby he diſcovereth adultery in the heart and in the eye. O atheiſt, thou muſt take up the ten Commandments, and ſubſcribe *guilty* to them all: And let me tell you this, if ye will ſubſcribe the Law to Chriſt, He will ſubſcribe the Goſpel to you; if thou wilt ſincerely ſay, *I am guilty*, he will as ſincerely ſay, I have pardoned; *Son or Daughter be of good courage, thy ſins are forgiven thee.*

Fourthly, Some build their aſſurance upon the apprehenſions

prehenſions of the hatred of ſome particular ſin, that albeit it was ſometimes as their right hand, or their eye, yet now they can pluck it out, or cut it off: But O, will thou but conſider, ſome ſins may be made weak, and the ſoul (though not upon a right principle) brought to hate it, and to cry unto it, *get you hence*, and yet the intereſt of Satan may be ſtrong in the heart. The fifth miſtake is of many who judge themſelves, becauſe they go a greater length then the former, and are kept free from all groſs outbreaking ſin; how many are there who go ſleeping down to hell with this; I am no drunkard, nor adulterer, nor murderer, nor thief, nor whore: this long have I lived in the town, and they were never born that can ſay, I have wronged them; and ſo they adventure their ſoul upon this, they never committed any groſs ſin. I beſeech you be not deceived: remember how that wretched man did ſpeed, *Luk.* 18. 11. *I am no extortioner, nor adulterer, nor even as this publican, &c.* poor creature that he was, Chriſt giveth not a teſtimonial to every one who take it for themſelves; and I muſt tell ſome of you, that there may be deſperate atheiſts without God, and without Chriſt in the world, & yet be free from groſs outbreaking ſins; I do not think but many of theſe who crucified the Lord of Glory, were keeped from other groſs ſins; what knoweſt thou, O man that there is more favour ſhewed to thee, in that thou art keeped from ſome groſs ſins, when yet thou haſt a deſperatly wicked heart, then is ſhewed to the devil, when ſome links of his chain are taken in, and reſtraining power keeping him from his outmoſt bounds, God will ſometimes reſtrain a hypocrite, or a heathen, as it was ſaid of *Abimelech, and God reſtrained him*: there may be a cord put upon thy jaws, when thou art far from having the power of conquering grace, it may be alſo, that all that abſtaining from outward out-breakings, proceedeth but from outward diſadvantages, and not from any fear of God, or reſpect to him, yea, not ſo much as from the fear of any eternal puniſhment: are there not many amongſt us, believe it, there are many that take away ſhame, and

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Church censure, or civil punishment, and other inconveniencies of that sort, and set a thousand hells before them, they would not be keeped back from one sin, but would take their hazard of them all: Yea, is it not want of tentation and nothing else, that hindreth many from gross out-breakings; if Satan would come but with a kindled match, there wanteth no more to set tongue and hands, and all on fire of hell. O wretched soul, do but ask thy self how often thou hast tempted Satan, when he would not tempt thee, and how often thou hast followed a tentation, when it fled from thee; yea, when the Lord hath hedged up thy ways that thou could not overtake thy lovers, how many a long look hast thou sent after them, and what lustings of thy spirit within, and do ye think that heart-sins are nothing, although thou had no out-breakings, what were the matter of that: if thou had not a tongue, thou would break the third Command, and *curse God in thy heart*; if thou had not an eye, thou could commit adultery *in thy heart*: if thou had not a hand, thou might commit murder *in thy heart*. O therefore build not thy assurance upon this, that thou hast made clean the outside of the platter, when yet all filthiness is within. The sixth false foundation upon which I am sure too many build their assurance, is their gifts and parts, especially upon these two, the gift of Prayer, and the gift of Knowledge; but believe it, it is not much to be a Christian in tongue, but it is much to be a Christian in heart; know you not that this will cast out many, *we have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils*. No doubt, these had been excellent flourishers, and if the tongue would have done it, they had been highly advanced; but yet ye see these men meet with a *depart from me, I know you not*. Ah think upon it, he is not the best Christian that is the best Orator. Religion that is pure, and undefiled, consisteth more in the affection, then in the tongue, and more in practice then in profession. I beseech you when you cast up your evidences of assurance, consi-

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der how well you have done, and not how well ye have spoken.

The seventh false ground whereby many do misjudge themselves, is, their supposed peace of conscience: O saith one, my conscience doth not charge me with any thing, I thank God I have a quiet mind and nothing troubles me; but ah poor wretch, wilt thou tell me, may not the strong man be within, and therefore all is at peace? a dumb conscience and a seared conscience, is a dreadful plague. Knowest thou not that many say, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart: and because they say so, the Lord shall not spare them, but all the curses in his Book shall ly upon them.

The eighth false ground is, the approbation of other Christians, so that if they have the approbation of some such exercised Christians, or if they have the approbation of such a Minister, that is the way to silence all their disputings. O cursed be the person that putteth his trust in men who are liars; O man or woman, let me assure you this, if ye had a Testimonial to present to Christ subscribed with all the hands of every Christian that ever ye were acquainted with, this will be enough for Christ to reject you and it both, *I know you not, and therefore depart from me.* There is an emphasis in that word, *I know you not*, as if he had said, it is not much though all others know you, if I know you not.

The ninth false ground is their diligent observing the Ordinances, their going to preachings, and their going to Communions, *and running to and fro*, pretending this end, *that knowledge may be increased*; but know it, there are many that have sitten down at a table with Christ here, that shall never sit down at the higher Table with him hereafter: Are there not many that shall say unto Christ in the great day, *Have we not eaten and drunken in thy presence*, unto whom Christ shall say, *depart from me, I know you not.*

The tenth false foundation, which is the strong delusion of Atheists, of which no doubt there are many here to day, is the building of their eternal happiness upon

upon this, I never met with a croſs, I never knew what it was to have a ſad day: but to thee I ſhall only ſay, it may be thou never had a joyful day, neither in all thy ſinful pleaſures under the Sun; but let me tell thee, it is bad divinity to conclude, therefore I am in the way to heaven: It may be it were better reaſoning, (and though I will not ſay it, yet it cometh nearer truth) I had never a croſs, therefore I am going on in the way to hell. O wilt thou but conſider, what if he be *heaping coals upon thy head, and ſatting thee to the day of ſlaughter*? What if this word be your portion? *Eat, drink and be merry while you are here, for to morrow thou muſt certainly die*; what are all your pleaſures, and what are all your honours, and what are all your poſſeſſions? What are they all? are they not a bone caſt unto a dog? the Lord valueth them not, What if they be *the fatting of you to the day of ſlaughter*?

Now as to theſe who deny they have any intereſt in Chriſt, when indeed they have, they commonly deceive themſelves and vex their own ſpirits upon ſome of theſe or the like miſtakes, 1. Some judge of their eſtate, by their preſent frame and condition, ſo that if they be in an evil frame, they begin and raze the foundation; and to ſuch I would only ſay, that every change of condition doth not ſpeak a change of eſtate; a child of God may be in much darkneſs, and under much deadneſs, and yet a child of God ſtill, *Pſal.* 73. It was an evil frame to be as a beaſt before God, and yet even then he keepeth grips and holdeth him by the right hand: *Job* was often in a very evil frame, and yet he holdeth faſt his integrity, and why then ſhould thou upon that account caſt away thine?

2. Chriſtians judge their eſtate by diſpenſations, they think every change of diſpenſations, ſpeaketh a change of eſtate, and if Chriſt do not ſmile always, we know not what it is to keep up the Faith of our intereſt: and indeed this is a great fault among Chriſtians, that when they cannot read love in the beautiful face of Chriſt, they think it is not in his heart. What though he change his diſpenſation, doth that ſpeak forth a change

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of thy estate? Christ cannot change his voice to us, but we think he changeth his heart; Christ cannot speak to us in the whirle-wind, but we cry out, why art thou become unto us as an enemy? O shall precious Christ be thus mistaken.

The third ground of mistake about our Interest in Christ is, that we judge of our estate by what we are in our selves, and not by what we are in Christ. When a Christian beginneth to judge & search himself, he can find nothing in himself, but what is the matter of doubting, and therefore thinks it high presumption to think himself a Believer: But O fool, can thou not look to Christ, and cry out, though in my self I be nothing, yet in him I am all; O if Christians knew to judge of themselves, by what they are in Christ, and not by what they are in themselves, that with one eye they might look to themselves, and cry out, *I am undone*, and with another look to Christ, and cry out, *There is hope in Israel concerning me*, that is, with one eye they might look to themselves and *blush*, and with another eye they might look to Christ, and *hope*; that with one eye they might look to themselves & *weep*, and with another eye they might look to Christ and *rejoyce*. O Christian, will thou judge alway of thy self by what thou art in Christ, and not by what thou art in thy self; yea, I would say this to thee by the way, when thou meetest with temptations that put thee to dispute thy interest, do but send them to Christ to get an answer, and say, O precious Christ answer this tentation, for this is Christs way with the soul, the law must bring us back to Christ, and Christ must send us back to the law, and deliver us over to it, not to the condemning power of it as before, but the directing and guiding power of it as a rule of holiness; so that a Christians whole life must be a sweet and constant travelling between Christ and the Law; when thou hast broken the Law, flie unto Christ to take away guilt, and when thou hast closed with Christ, come running out again in his strength to perform the Law.

The fourth mistake is, that Christians judge of their estate

estate by the measure of their graces, more nor by the sincerity of them, some Christians if they find not love in such a degree, and if they find not repentance in such a degree, immediatly they begin and raze the foundation, and do call their enjoyments delusions, and their faith presumption, and their mortification hypocrisie; but I must say this to thee, we should not only weigh our graces in the ballance, but try them also by the touch-stone, for the smallest piece of gold is gold, and the least degree of faith is alike precious faith, with that the Apostles themselves had.

The fifth ground of mistake among Christians is this, that they compare themselves more unto the Saints then they judge of themselves by the Word. O saith one, if I were like *David*, I would believe, but I am not like *David*, nor *Job*, nor *Hezekiah*: and therefore there is none of the Saints to which I should go, & if I should call, there is none to answer, and why then should I believe? I would only say to thee whose objection that is, it is even *Davids* objection, *Psal.* 22. 5, 6. *Our fathers trusted in thee*; O they were excellent men, but what a man am I? *A worm and not a man*; & yet he was put from that objection: and I would say this, are ye below him, In what? I hope ye are not below *David* in necessity; Now though ye be below him in grace, if ye be not below him in necessity, ye have so much the more right to believe; for as we said before, necessity giveth you a right, and the more necessity, the greater right to believe.

The sixth ground is, that Christians judge of their estate by Christs part of the Covenant, and not by their own, rather examining themselves by what Christ hath promised to do for them, then by what is left to them to do, which thing if it were heeded, would put a close to many of our mistakes and disputings.

Having now laid out some mistakes upon either hand, the next we would do is, to propose some considerations to press you to guard against these mistakes, especially the first.

And the first consideration is, that mistakes about ones interest in Christ, and assurance, is a most univer-

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sal and popular evil: it is not one of a City, nor two of a family, but many are mistaken in their interest in Christ; that word, *Prov.* 30. 12. *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not cleansed from their iniquity*; it is not one or two that are under this mistake, but it is a generation, and I suppose there are many of us, that are of this tribe and generation, *Mat.* 7.22. He saith, *many in that day shall say unto me, Lord, Lord, and have we not prophesied, and yet he shall say unto them, I know you not*: since it is so universal a mistake, I intreat you, be much in the search of your selves, search your own selves; certainly I think, if there were but within this Church one that were under this mistake, it should put us all to this, *Master is it I, Master is it I?* but how much more since there is a generation of mistakers, should it not be our exercise every day to cry out, *is it I?*

The second consideration is, that as it is a most universal, so also it is a most irrecoverable mistake; if ye mistake about this, your being in Christ, there is no making up of that mistake, if once ye pass the borders of Time with this lie in your right hand, I am in Christ, there is no hope of recovery, eternity will cut off access to make up mistake: I intreat you go not down to your grave with this, I am in Christ, when yet Christ may say, I know you not: I believe it, if ye could have a testimonial subscribed by the hands of all the most eminent and tender Christians that ye have known, that ye are indeed a Saint, and if all the Ministers that ever you spoke to, should praise you in the gate, and declare you to be a son and daughter of *Abraham*; yet when you shall bring up your testimonial to Heaven, and the Father shall read it, and shall ask you where is my Sons Name, if that be not there, it will certainly be rejected, and cast over the Bar.

Thirdly, It is a soul-destroying delusion, this mistake about ones interest in Christ, is the very ruine of the immortal soul, according to that word, *Isa.* 44.20. *A deceived heart hath led him aside*, and what is the fruit of it, *so that he cannot deliver his soul*, and by consequence

ſequence it may be ſaid, that they deſtroy their ſou
I believe it, there are many that go to hell in a chari
of deluſion; we know ſome Chriſt guideth to heav
by the gates of hell, and letteth them not ſee life
they be in ſight of hell; but it is true alſo, there a
others whom the devil guideth to hell, by the ve
borders of heaven, he maketh them believe they a
dwelling in the gate of heaven all their days, and y
at laſt they are thruſt down to theſe habitations th
are prepared for the devil and his angels.

Fourthly, If once a perſon be miſtaken about the
Intereſt in Chriſt, they will have theſe three horrib
diſadvantages attending upon them. 1. As long as
is under this miſtake, he is without all reach of prof
ing by the Ordinances, for when he heareth preachin
he will apply promiſes, when he ſhould apply threa
nings; and upon the other hand, apply threatning
when he ſhould apply promiſes; and ſo that whi
ſhould be his medicine, becometh poiſon to him. 2.
long as he is under this miſtake, it maketh him that
cannot pity nor have compaſſion upon himſelf, th
though he be the moſt ſuitable object of compaſſio
yet he knows not what it is to weep over his ow
ruine. 3. Readily all his graces are but deluſions,
his good motions are but flaſhes, and all his mortifi
tion counterfeit, and all his tenderneſs is but the m
ther of ſtupidity; and therefore guard againſt miſtak
about your intereſt in Chriſt, I intreat you.

Fifthly, Conſider that miſtakes about ones intere
is a moſt abiding and conſtant miſtake, believe it,
once we miſtake in this, it is one to a hundred if ev
we come right again: this is clear, *Jer.* 8. 5. *They ho
faſt deceit, they keep it with both their hands*: And I
44. 20. *There is a lie in their right hand*, that is, th
hold the lie, and they keep it with all their power;
ſay, if once one be miſtaken concerning their inter
in Chriſt, it is hard to put them from it; yea, deluſi
it is ſuch an abiding thing, that we find Chriſt ſpea
eth of it, as if it would wait upon one before the jud
ment ſeat of Chriſt; and as if ſome would never qu
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their hope of heaven, till Christ pronounce that word, *Depart from me, I know you not*; delusion may carry us over the borders of Time, and lead us in to Eternity.

Sixthly, There is much counterfeit Religion that is in those dayes, there is a painted faith, there is a painted love, there is a painted mortification, and there is a painted tenderness; some they love shadows and pictures, and yet they do not love the very shadow of Christ, and are there not many who think they are imbracing Christ, and yet are imbracing a delusion and a fancy.

That which thirdly we would speak to from this point, is, to give you some evidences by which ye may know if the assurance ye have of your being in Christ, be right or no: Believe it, there are many that draw that conclusion, *I am in Christ*, which the devil and their own deceitful heart hath drawn, and Christ never gave consent to it: And I shall propose these seven or eight evidences of real assurance, by which ye may discern.

First, A real assurance is a purifying and sanctifying assurance: this is clear, 1 *Joh.* 3. 3. *Every man that hath this hope in him*, that is, perswaded of this that he shall come to Heaven, *He will purifie himself, as he is pure*: And 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit.* O! When a Christian getteth Christ in his arms, he cannot but cry forth, *What have I to do any more with idols?* When he hath once gotten Christ in his arms, he wil answer every tentation that he meeteth with this, *I am not mine own, I am bought with a price*, I cannot now dispose of my self; and if your assurance of going to heaven be not a purifying assurance, be perswaded of it, it is but the devils *pillow sewed under your arm holes.* Is it possible a person can be assured of heaven, and not study holiness, can such a delusion as this overtake you.

Secondly, A real assurance putteth the Christian to apressing and earnest pursuit after communion and

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fellowship with God, is it possible for one to be assur
ed, and not to be saying, *he is sick of love*, this is clear
Song 2. 16, 17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; and
immediatly followeth, *Turn thee, O my beloved, and
be like a roe, or a young hart upon the mountains of Be
ther*. And it is clear, *Song* 7. 10, 11. *I am my beloveds
and his desire is towards me*; and what followeth upon
that, She cometh and Inviteth Christ; *O come down
with me to the fields, let us lodge in the villages.* O
when gave we Christ such an invitation as this. O pre
cious Christ, let us *lodge in the villages, and go down
to the secret places of the field*; and *Psal.* 63. 1. *My God
there is his assurance*; and immediatly followeth
upon that, *Early will I seek thee, my soul thirsteth af
ter thee as in a dry parched land where no water is.* There
is a pressing desire after communion. But I would
ask you, Are there not many here who have the hope
of heaven (to their apprehension) and yet the desire
of communion with Christ, was never with them: I
desire to say to thee, (be who thou will) *Be not deceiv
ed, God is not mocked, that which thou sowest, thou
shalt also reap.* I think there are some of us, we would
let Christ live in heaven many days without giving
him one visite, if he would let us alone: But O, if we
were within sight of our interest in Christ, how often
would this be our complaint, when he were absent;
*They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where
they have laid him*; or my idol hath carried me a-
way from him, and I know not where to find him.

Thirdly, Assurance of our being in Christ, will put
us to the exercise of praise; believe it, I think this is
one of the most searching evidences of assurance;
there are some Christians they will be convinced for
the neglect of the duty of Prayer, but for the neglect
of the duty of praise, they never have one conviction;
and I tell you the reason of it, prayer is a selfish grace
(so to speak) but praise is a denying grace; prayer
seeketh, but praise giveth. *Exod.* 15. 2. *He is my God,
I will prepare him an habitation, & he is my fathers God,
I will exalt him.* Ps. 118. 28. *He is my God, I will prai-
him*

him, he is my God, I will exalt him: what needed *David* these repetitions, might not one serve? No saith he, I would even spend my days in this, *My God, my God*; there is much of heaven in that word, *My God*, and love committeth many sweet *tautologies*: Now I say to thee, was thou ever put to the heart-exercise of praise, by this assurance that thou hast, this is an evidence indeed, but alas, many of us cannot say it.

Fourthly, A person that liveth within sight of his interest, Christ is matchless unto him, as is clear, *Song* 2.3. *I sat down under his shadow*, there is faith and assurance of it; and what accompanieth that, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons*; Christ hath not a match, saith the Spouse, in his sweetness; his power, his beauty and his usefulness is above all.

Fifthly, Real assurance is a humbling thing, the assurance of a Christian maketh him to sit low in the dust: Was not *Jacob* low in his own eyes, when he cryed out, *I am less then the least of all thy mercies*; What? was not *David* low in his own eyes, when he spake that word, *What am I, and what is my fathers house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?* and was not *Paul* a low man in his own eyes, *Eph.* 3.8. *I am less then the least of all thy Saints*; and when he cryed out, *I am the chief of sinners*. The assurance that is real, it will make a Christian to sit down in the dust, and cry out, *Wo is me, I am a man of polluted lips*.

Sixthly, Real assurance will put him to take much pleasure and delight in the going about of duties; that word, *Psal.* 40.8. *My God*, saith he, that is his assurance; and presently he subjoyneth, *I delight to do thy will, O Lord*; this he speaketh of himself, as himself, and likewise as a type of Christ, *Psal.* 119. 115. *Depart from me evil doers, I will keep the commandments of my God*; I believe the love of Christ, when it is much in exercise, it will constrain us to our duty, and therefore this proud transporting assurance in these days, that setteth men above all Duties and Ordinances, and maketh them count the Gospel, as well as the Law, *but beggerly rudiments*, and cry

out to their neighbours, *Stand aback for I am holier then thou*, muſt needs be a deluſion.

Laſtly, There are theſe three properties of a real aſſurance, it is a begotten aſſurance, it is a living aſſurance, and it is a conſtraining aſſurance.

The firſt two properties of it are ſet down in that, 1 *Pet.* 1.3. *He hath begotten us to a lively hope*; who begat that aſſurance in thee? I ſuppoſe ſome have aſſurance, and it was begotten without travel; but if Chriſt be not the father of thy aſſurance, it will evaniſh and paſs away. And ſecondly, it muſt be a living aſſurance, ſome hearts are dead as a ſtone, and yet they ſay, they have the hope of heaven. And thirdly, it muſt be a conſtraining aſſurance, it will put the Chriſtian to do what he commands, yea, if it were the moſt pleaſant *Iſaac* that we have, if he commandeth us to ſacrifice it, we would put a knife to the throat of it, and be willing to offer it up.

Now after all theſe evidences, I deſire to have a report from you concerning your eſtate; what think ye of your ſelves, are ye in Chriſt, or no? I ſuppoſe if Chriſt ſhould come here to day, and put us all to the door but theſe that are in Chriſt, we would have a thin aſſembly; I confeſs, I wonder, that that word doth not make us to walk with ſadneſs, *Many are called, but few are choſen*; Now I aſk this queſtion at you all, as in the ſight of God, and as ye will one day anſwer unto him that will be your judge; what think of your ſelves? Is there none here that can give a preſent poſitive anſwer to this, *Are ye in Chriſt?* I ſuppoſe this, if I were to go round them that are here, and aſk, are ye in Chriſt, *are ye in* Chriſt? O I doubt much if there ſhould be many negative anſwers within the doors, we have ſo ſtrong a faith ſome of us, that ſince we were born, we never doubted of it; But I think (without commending doubting) I may ſay, the faith that thou never doubted of, is too like a deluſion, and the faith that thou never took pains to keep, and yet it

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keeped it self, that is too like a deluſion, the faith that never knew what it was to put thee to a real ſeeking of Chriſt, Is too like a deluſion. But let me cloſe with this, be your eſtate what it will, ſearch and come away; I think that is one of the moſt Goſpel invitations that is in all the Scripture, *Lament.* 3. 40. *Let us ſearch and try our wayes, and turn again unto the Lord*; when thou haſt ſearched, come away, for I tell thee this; there will be nothing that will commend thee to Chriſt ſo much as neceſſity; and I hope there is none of you but ye have enough of this s and know it, if ye will not come to Chriſt, he will compel you to come, but it ſhall not be for your advantage to ſtay away, till ye be compelled. O perſons that are out of Chriſt, *Come away*, O perſons that are in Chriſt, *Come away*; we muſt preach that word, *come away*, unto you, as long as you are here, till ye come and be *fixed as a pillar in the houſe of God*, and go no more out. O ſtudy to be near him! O Chriſtian, didſt thou ever think upon this, and ſay with thy ſelf, O when ſhall I have immediat imbraces of bleſſed Chriſt, when ſhall there be nothing between my heart and Him? till then, we never get Chriſt near enough, there is always ſomething between him and us, till we be above the clouds: O theſe immediate ſoul-infoldings and imbracings of Chriſt: are ye never ſending a meſſenger to heaven, deſiring a paſs to go away, that ye may enjoy them, and are ye not longing for the day when the waters of *Jordan* ſhall divide themſelves, and the ranſomed of the Lord ſhall paſs thorow; Now let us *ſing praiſes to our King, ſing praiſes, for he hath gone up with a ſhout, and ſhall come again, ſing praiſes to our King, ſing praiſes.*

SERMON IX.

2 Cor. 13. 5. *Examine your ſelves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own ſelves: know ye not your own ſelves, how that Jeſus Chriſt is in you, except ye be reprobates?*

I Think ere long, there are many that paſſeth under the notion of Profeſſors, that the verieſt Atheiſt when he beholdeth their walk, may cry out, *Art thou alſo become like unto one of us*; Are there not many here that are in a golden dream, and in a fools paradiſe, *that dream they eat, and behold when they awake, they ſhall be hungry*; therefore I think it is incumbent upon us, to ſearch and examine our ſtate and condition; prophanity hath ſlain its thouſands, but deluſion and preſumption hath ſlain their ten thouſands. It was an ancient complaint of Chriſt, *Luk.* 12. 57. *And why even of your ſelves judge ye not what is right?* I am perſwaded of this, there are many decreets of peace paſt upon earth, that are never ratified in heaven; there are many that cry out, *The bitterneſs of death is paſt*, whom yet God by the ſword of his juſtice ſhall hew in pieces before our eyes. We told you at the laſt occaſion, that we ſpake upon theſe words, there were ſix things we intended to ſpeak from them; of the firſt three we have ſpoken.

That which we intend to ſpeak to at this time, is, That there is much ſoul-advantage and ſpiritual gain that doth redound to the Chriſtian by the diſtinct perſwaſion of his intereſt in Chriſt; this we gathered from *Pauls* doubling the command of ſearching and trying themſelves, as if he had ſaid, it is a buſineſs that will be ſo much for your advantage, that it is incumbent for you to ſearch and try diligently: And for further clearing of the point, I ſhall only give theſe three places, *Rev.* 2. 17. *I will give unto them a white ſtone, and in the ſtone a new name written, that no man knoweth, but he*

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that hath received it: By *the new name, and the white ſtone*, is underſtood aſſurance, and the intimation of it to the ſoul: This indeed is ſuch a mercy, that I defy any to make language of it, no man knoweth it, much leſs can he expreſs it, but he that is the poſſeſſor of it; and that place, Iſa. 62. 3. *I will give unto them a new name, which the mouth of the Lord will name.* O what a name muſt that be, which the mouth of the Lord will name? I think what he giveth muſt be one of the nobleſt names that ever was given, all the ſtiles and titles under heaven cannot equal it. And thirdly, we ſee *David*, in the 18. *Pſalm*, found much ſweetneſs and advantage in this, when nine times he hath that word, *My ſtrength, my rock, my fortreſs and my deliverer, my ſtrength and my buckler, the horn of my ſalvation, and my high tower*; O *David*, what needeth all theſe *Mys*? *David* would anſwer, O! he is ſo ſweet in himſelf, but O! much ſweeter to me, when I put to that poſſeſſive note, *My*.

Now to ſpeak more particularly to theſe advantages of aſſurance, The firſt is, that a perſon that is aſſured of his intereſt in Chriſt, he is much in deſiring communion with Chriſt. *Tell me, O thou whom my ſoul loveth,* (there is his aſſurance) *where thou feedeſt, and where thou makeſt thy flock to reſt at noon*; there is deſire of communion; and *Song* 7.10,11. *My beloved is mine, and his deſire is towards me*, there is her aſſurance, and immediatly followeth, *Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields, let us lodge in the villages*, there her deſire of communion; *Song* 2.16,17. *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; and what followeth upon that, *He feedeth among the lillies, until the day break, and the ſhadows flee away. Turn my beloved, and be as a roe, or a wild hart upon the mountains of Bether*, that is in ſhort, let me have ſweet correſpondency and fellowſhip with thee, till the day of eternity ſhall come. I think the deſires of an aſſured Chriſtian, they are like the grave, they cry continually, *Give, give*, and they never ſay, *it is enough*; what is the reaſon ye ſeek ſo little after fellow-

ſhip with Chriſt, it is even this, ye are not perſwaded of your intereſt in him; believe it, if once ye had attained to this bleſſed length, as to cry out, *Chriſt is mine*, it would be a hell upon earth for you to live at ſuch a diſtance with him as you do for the moſt part; O but aſſurance maketh abſence from Chriſt an unſupportable burden, *Pſ.*22.1. *My God, my God*, there is aſſurance; and immediatly followeth this complaint, *why hideſt thou ſelf from me? Song* 3.1,2,3. that word, *Him whom my ſoul loveth*, made her to weep ſo much under abſence from Chriſt; & *Joh.*20 13. when the Angels ask the queſtion at *Mary*, *Woman why weepeſt thou?* I think ſhe thought it a needleſs queſtion, and ſhe tells the cauſe of it, *They have taken away my Lord*; I think her heart was at her mouth, when ſhe pronounced theſe two words, *My Lord*, ſhe ſpake them with a great deal of emphaſis and force; could ye reſent abſence with Chriſt ſo little, if ye were aſſured he were yours. I confeſs, it is no wonder when perſons loſe that which is not their own, that they weep not much for the loſs of it: but oh! to loſe that which is our own, it maketh it a croſs and a burden to us.

Secondly, It maketh the ſoul to have a high and matchleſs eſteem of precious Chriſt, *Song* 5.10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chief among ten thouſand*; O ſaith the Spouſe, I never ſaw his like, and I ſhall never ſee his like again; there is much in that *My*; intereſt maketh her look upon Chriſt with another eye nor ſhe would have done, ſtrangers look upon him but as a *tree planted on the ſand*, 1 *Pet.*2.7. *To you that believe Chriſt is precious*, not every one; And *Song* 2.2. *I ſat down under his ſhadow with great delight*, the reaſon is intereſt in the words going before, *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, ſo is my beloved among the ſons*; yea aſſurance will make every thing in Chriſt exceeding pleaſant to the ſoul, as is clear, *Song* 5. 16. *My beloved is altogether lovely*, or *he is all deſires*. I tell you what aſſurance will do, it will make Chriſts perſon pleaſant & precious to the ſoul, it will make Chriſts

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Natures pleasant to the soul, it will make Christs Offices pleasant to the soul, and it will make Christs promises pleasant to the soul, it will make threatnings pleasant to the soul, it will make the smell of Christs Garments pleasant to the soul, and it will make the kisses of his mouth pleasant to the soul: O saith the assured Christian, there is nothing of Christ but it is most pleasant, and is all desires; His threatnings are pleasant, they are the wounds of a friend, and His kisses are pleasant, they are better then wine, His Name it is pleasant, it is as precious oyntment poured forth, His smilings are most delightsome, *whose countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars*: O to imbrace a married Christ, how pleasant is it to the soul; What maketh you to have so low thoughts of Christ? even this, the want of assurance, that He is your Husband.

Thirdly, Assurance will make the Christian patiently to submit to every cross and sad dispensation he meeteth with: this is clear, *Heb.* 10 34. *They took with joy the spoiling of their goods*, and what made them do so: *They hoped for a better inheritance, and a more enduring substance*: I tell you, assurance, it will answer all crosses with this, *Christ is mine*; when they are afflicted, assurance will lift up its face and cry out, *Christ is mine*; and when they are reproached, they will comfort themselves with this, *Christ is mine, I can put on the Lord Jesus.*

Fourthly, Assurance will keep you from Apostacy, and defection from Christ, 2 *Pet.* 1.10. *Make your calling and election sure, and if ye do this* (saith he) *ye shall never fall*; *Heb.* 3. 11,12. It is there set down as a fruit of the evil heart of *misbelief*, it maketh us *depart from the living God*: but on the contrary, assurance knitteth the soul to Christ by a threefold cord, which is not easily broken: Believe it, the assured Christian can cry out with much confidence of faith, *My mountain standeth strong, I shall never be moved*, the assured Christian can cry out with much chearfulness: *In God will I praise his word, in God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what flesh can do unto me*; yea, he can sweetly sing in the very

very mouth of danger, *The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?* Psal. 27. 1.

Fifthly, Assurance keepeth all the graces of the spirit green and flourishing, it is as a refreshing dew upon our branches which maketh every grace sweetly to blossom in its season, 1. It stirreth up the exercise of love, O how vigorous are the actings of love, when a Christian can cry out, *My beloved is mine, and I am his,* Song 1. 13. *My beloved,* there is her assurance, *He is a bundle of myrrhe, and shall ly all night between my breasts,* that is, as long as time shall last, I shall never have Christ out of my heart; there is love, 1 *Joh.* 4. 19. *We loved him, because he loved us first*; our hearts are naturally cold, but love kindleth love; the sense of his love to us, putteth our hearts into a heavenly flame towards him again. 2 Assurance keeps up the exercise of prayer, it is the assured Christian that can pray best, and to best advantage; and in these three things especially is prayer helped by assurance: 1. It helpeth in the point of *boldness,* O but the assured Christian can go boldly to the throne of grace, crying, *Abba, father, and my Lord, and my God.* 2. It helpeth our diligence in prayer, *Psl.* 63. 1. *O my God,* there is assurance, *early will I seek thee,* there is his diligence as the fruit thereof. 3. It helpeth the *fervency* of prayer, as in that same place, *My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,* there is fervency as another fruit of his assurance. 4 Assurance keepeth in exercise and life, the grace of mortification, as is clear, by comparing 2 *Cor.* 4 verse last, with 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. *We look not after the things that are seen*; O *Paul,* what alleth you, may ye not take a look of the world? O saith *Paul,* and would you know the ground of it, *We know if this house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*; my house and my treasure is in heaven, I must have my heart there, and mine eyes also; would you know what would stay your pursuit after the world, study to have the assurance of your interest in Christ continually

nually with you. And 5. It keepeth in exercise the grace of humility: there is nothing will keep Christians so humble as assurance, *Gal.* 2. 20. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, *Eph.* 3. 8. there he is all in *exalting grace, and debasing himself.* It is the misbeliever and discouraged person, that dwelleth neareſt pride; believe it, misbelief is big with child of pride and apostacy, these are the two children which that fruitful mother will bring forth. And, 6. It will help the grace of repentance: would ye know what would make the Christian to repent, it is even this, to take Christ in our arms, and call him ours, *Zech.* 12. 10. *They shall look upon him*, that is their faith; *and they shall mourn, as one mourneth for his only son*; I think it is known by experience, the soul never weeps more tenderly under the conviction of sin, then when he hath Christ in his arms, and can say, *He is mine*: O how sweetly do they then complain; there is not a sight of Christ as their own, when they have offended, but it breaks all their heart in pieces,& it is as a sword piercing into the bones, when they cry out, O what a fool was I to offend such a precious One, in whom I had so much interest? was it not sense of interest that made *Mary* wash the feet of Christ with her tears? Lastly, it will keep in exercise the grace of joy, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. It is faith which maketh one to *rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory*; Would ye know why your graces are withered? Would ye know why all the pleasant plants of God within yout soul are decayed? it is this, ye live without sight of your interest in Christ, believe it (if so I may speak) assurance will be a watering to your graces every morning, and refresh them every hour, it being as a channel through which divine influences is conveighed to the increase of grace, and especially of joy.

The sixth advantage that cometh in to the Christian by assurance of his interest in Christ, is, That it maketh death exceeding pleasant and comfortable to the soul; What maketh death *the king of terrors*, and what

what maketh it ſo to us? Is it not this, we go to heaven under a cloud? the aſſured Chriſtian can take death in his arms, and cry out, welcome, *O friend*: the aſſured Chriſtian when he ſeeth the Chariots his father ſends for him, doth with old *Jacob* rejoyce, and *Pſal.* 23. *When I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death I will fear no evil*: What brought you that length, *David?* I tell you why, ſaith he, for *God is with me*, *verſ* 4. I think I need not fear any thing, when I have God in my company; it is the aſſured Chriſtian that can cry out, *why ſhould I fear death*? Should I not laugh at deſtruction? I think indeed, the aſſured Chriſtian needeth not fear death, becauſe death to him is the death of all his luſts. the funeral of all his ſorrows: and is not the day of death his coronation-day, his marriage day, the day of his triumph, & of his entering into reſt, and why then ſhould he fear it? The ſeventh advantage is, that a Chriſtian being in the ſtate of aſſurance, can put the higheſt account upon the ſmalleſt mercy that he meets with from God: the aſſured Chriſtian looketh upon every mercy as a wonder, it is the aſſured Chriſtian that cryeth out, *I am leſs then the leaſt of all thy mercies*: there is not a mercy he meeteth with, were it but a drop of cold water, but if he can read this on it, that it came from my huſband and from my father, it will be better to him then the ſweeteſt wine.

Laſtly, aſſurance doth exceedingly help us to chearfulneſs in obedience: O that is a remarkable connexion that *Paul* hath, *Act.* 27.23. *The Lord whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve*; that paſſage alſo, 2 *Cor.* 5.14. is very obſervable, *The love of Chriſt conſtraineth us, &c.* Why art thou ſo painful a Miniſter *Paul*? why *knoweſt thou no man after the fleſh*, art not led by carnal intereſts, nor affections: art ſo buſie and diligent, as all the world counteth thee mad? Why? (ſaith he) love will not let me reſt, if I would be lazie or carnal, or fold my hands to ſleep; the love of Chriſt doth alwayes ſound that in my ears, that I was dead, and he hath died for me, that

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henceforth I ſhould not live unto my ſelf, but unto him who died for me; *Now to him who is the firſt and the laſt, who was dead, and is alive for evermore,* We give praiſe.

FINIS.